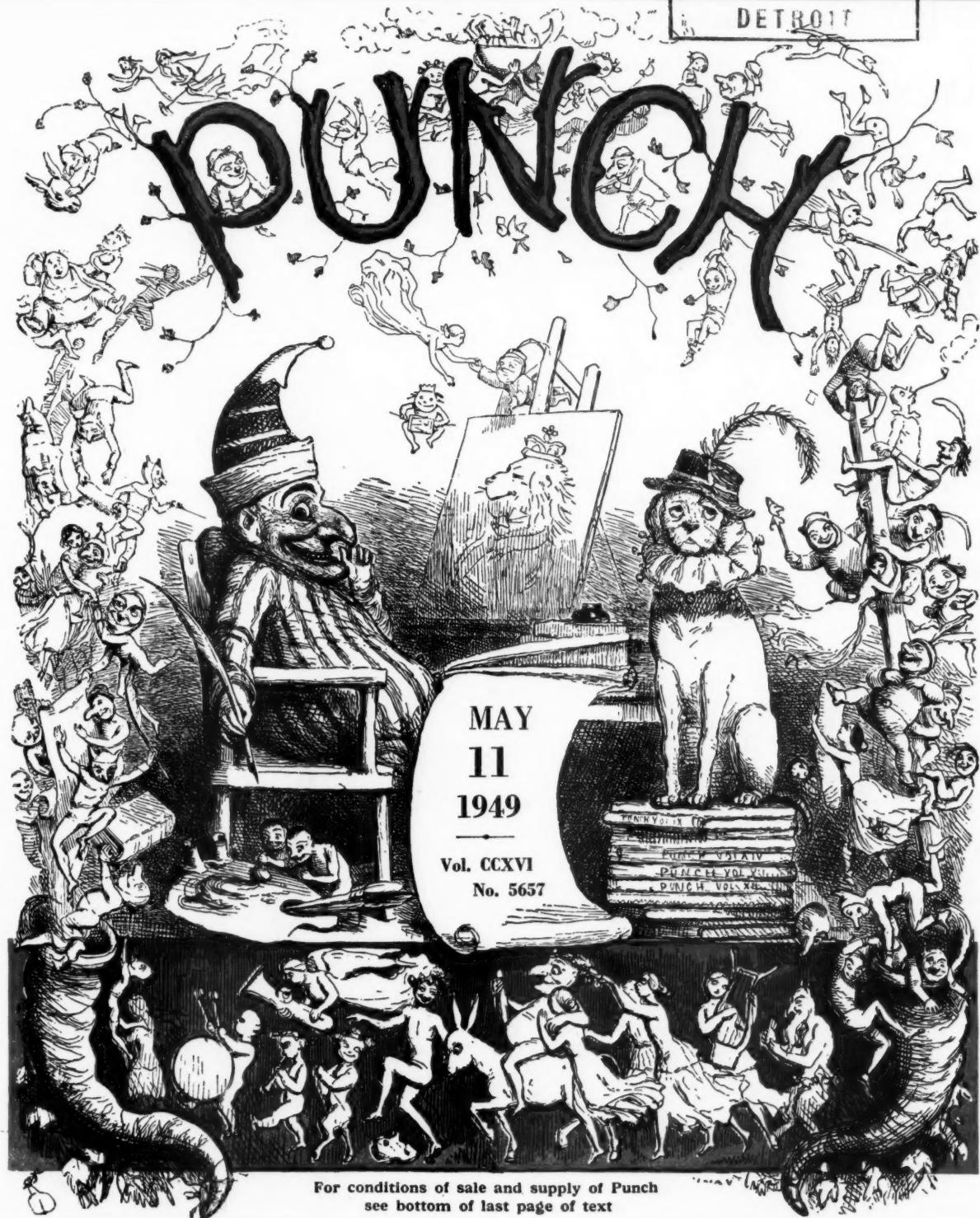


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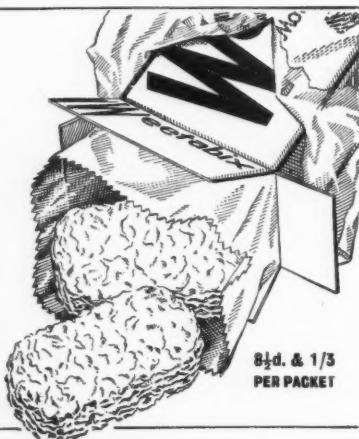


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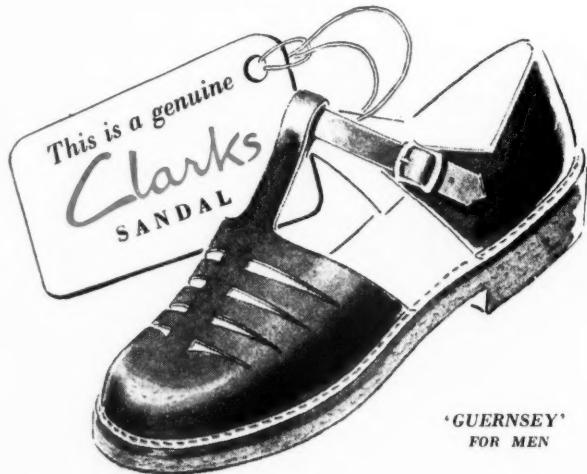
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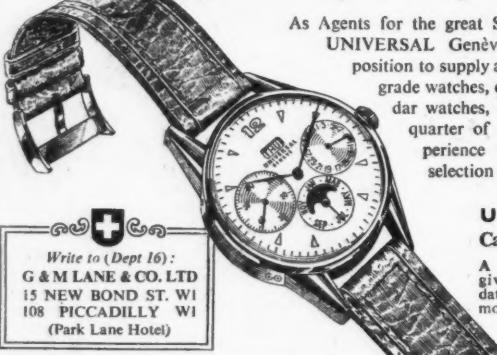
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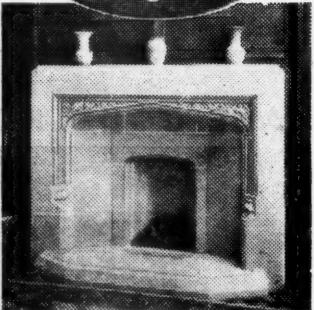
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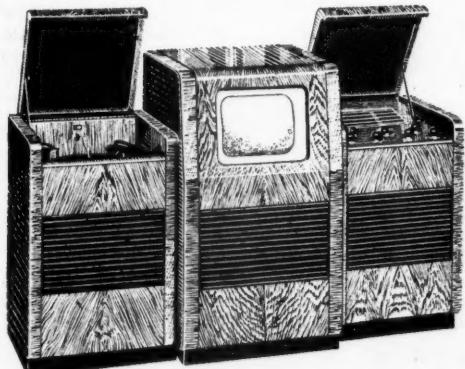


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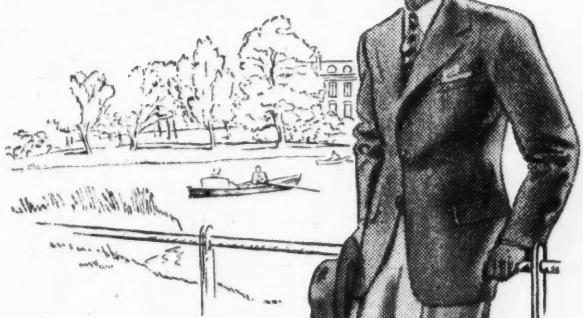
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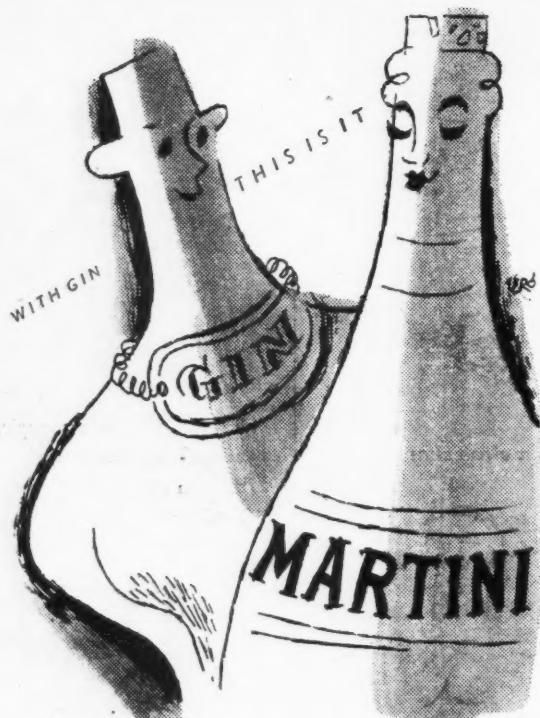
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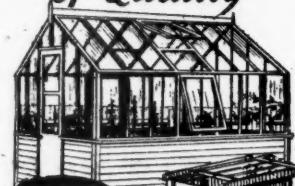


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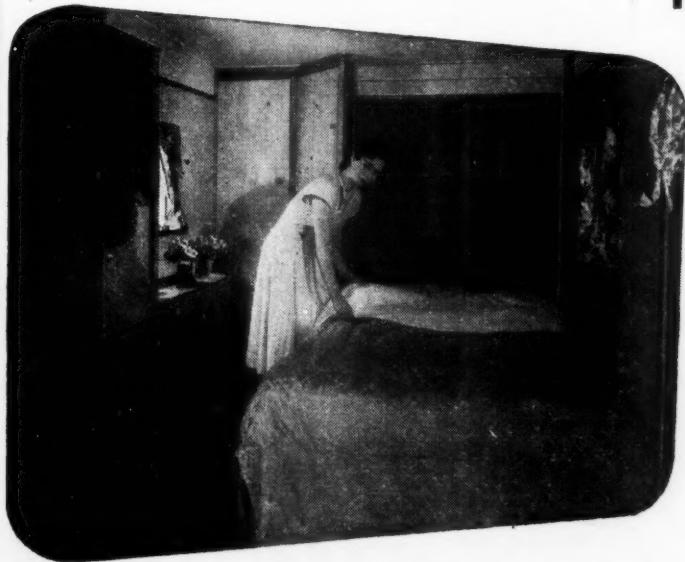
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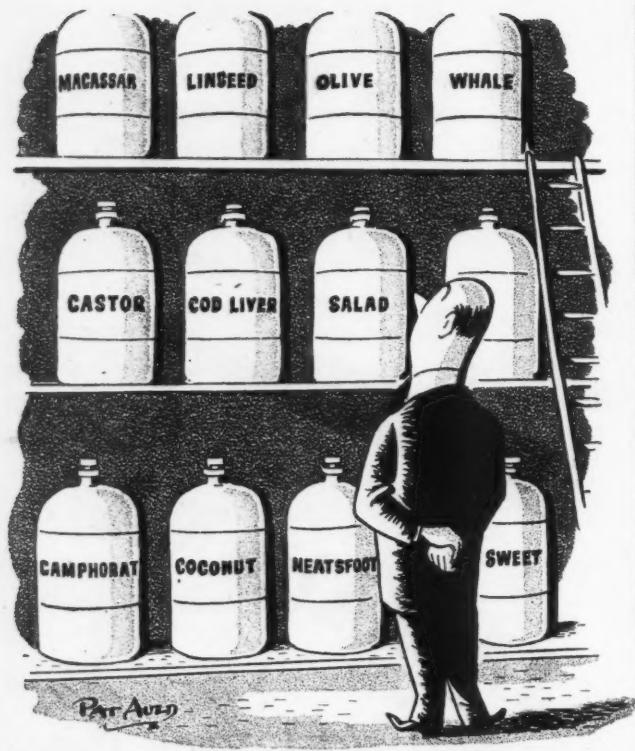
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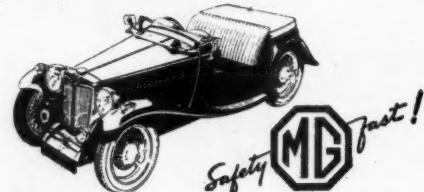


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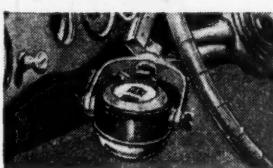
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The chances are, your brakes aren't as good as you think. They wear down and lose adjustment so gradually that you don't notice—until, one day, you need to stop **QUICKLY**... and can't.

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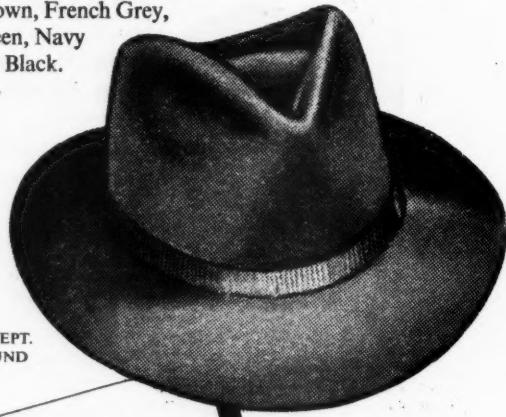
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Vol. CCXVI No. 5657

May 11 1949

Charivaria

WE sometimes wonder how the Government feels about those people who insist upon gnashing its own teeth back at it.

• • •
A columnist wants to know why the majority of holiday-makers start to throw stones into the sea as soon as they get on to the beach. Because they think it's their land-ladies' prerogative to throw them in the opposite direction.



• • •
"MATERNITY HOME IN THE AIR"
Headline in "East Grinstead Courier"
To meet the stork half-way?

• • •
A professional golfer says parents do not seem to realize the risk their children run when wandering about on the course. Their ears, of course, should be plugged with cotton-wool.

• • •
What makes men become tramps? asks a writer. One theory is that they start off as ordinary week-end hikers, get keener, and finally decide to turn professional.

• • •
"About 37,500,000 small whiskies—156 gallons—were lost in the fire which destroyed a bonded store near Edinburgh last night."
"Evening Standard"

Yes, that would be just about it.

• • •
"In spite of all the stunts to attract travellers, passenger traffic on the railways won't pay this year," says an official. So we're still in the lap of the goods.



• • •
"Why does the Englishman have such a long face when he is dancing?" asks an American visitor. His inquiry has been passed on to Mr. Jack Hulbert.

• • •
Undisclosed casual earnings are frequently traced and taxed, says an Inland Revenue official. The radio quiz contestant never knows who is listening when Barney gives him the money.

• • •
A thief has been stealing wine by cutting round holes in vintners' windows—and then working his fingers to the Beaune.

• • •
"BRITISH FLY IN THE MILLIONTH TON"
"Daily Mail"
There can't be that much ointment.



• • •
An Austrian claims to have invented a new way of bringing rain. With the old way of washing the car that makes two.

• • •
The quantity of bread baked in this country is increasing. Nowadays people are putting more of it under their butter ration.

• • •
Thieves who entered a Cape Town billiards-room rolled out the safe on snooker balls. And there the break ended.

I Can't Explain It All Now

WHAT's the causes of these eclipses then?" "As to that," began the man in the corner seat—but his wife was too quick for him.

"The world's supposed to go round and round, you see." She was a small, earnest woman in a brown hat with a bow of the same felt-like material flattened across the front of it. "Only the moon's going round too." She made small circulatory movements with a gloved hand, leaning forward across the carriage; and the man in the mackintosh, the poser of the question, nodded expectantly. He had followed her so far, but he felt, so much his expression implied, that there was more to come.

The woman clearly felt so too. For perhaps half a minute she continued to lean forward, her mouth at instant readiness for speech and her circling hand striving, after the manner of a flywheel, to keep the conversation running over the interval.

"But I can't explain it all now," she said.

She had all my sympathy. It is characteristic of eclipses, as of other celestial phenomena, that one cannot explain them all now. A moment ago the thing was clear. Five minutes hence, after a pause for reflection and perhaps a little rapid work on the back of an envelope, one will have a complete answer; the heavenly bodies will fall into their appointed places with the precision of the Brigade of Guards. But the actual posing of the question seems to knock all the sense out of the solar system. "Here"—if I have said it once I have said it a hundred times—"is the earth and here is the moon and here, on a different scale of course, is the sun." I indicate their positions by jabbing at the air with a forefinger, not having any oranges about me. "And here," I say, making combing motions with my outstretched fingers, "are the rays of the sun."

"Now you've eclipsed the earth," they say.

"All right then. Let's say the moon is here, on the other side . . ."



"Our first star this morning is none other than someone of whom, I must confess, I have never heard."

"Where was the earth again?"

I show them where the earth was, and they ask whereabouts on it we are.

"It doesn't matter," I say. "Here, if you like."

"Then it's night, so the sun is eclipsed anyway."

There is an obvious risk of confusion if I leave it at that, so I give the earth a half-turn to bring us back into the daylight. This is a fatal mistake, for it leads to talk about the rotation of the earth, and it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the earth's rotation about its own axis has nothing to do with eclipses. The woman in the carriage got herself hopelessly bogged down at the start by making this elementary error. It takes me ten minutes to get the earth stationary again, and by that time somebody has begun to object that I have put the sun and moon and earth all in the same straight line, "as if they were all sitting on a level piece of cardboard."

"Well, why not?"

"Because there isn't any up or down in space, so how can they be?"

"She means, you've put the sun over there, but it might just as easily be up here or right down there for all anyone can say."

"There may not be an up or down," I explain, "but there's a higher and lower."

We are now within two seconds of the plane of the ecliptic and all the hideous misunderstanding that that entails . . .

Meanwhile, during the brief seconds I had been occupied with these reflections, the whole question of eclipses had been disposed of by the husband of the woman in the carriage. He simply doubled up his fists and rolled them over and over in a wool-winding action. "They get in each other's way, like," he said.

The man in the mackintosh agreed that that must be the way of it, but his mind was still on what the woman had said.

"When you think of the Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean and the Arctic and all that water going round and round—"

"Not to mention this train and all," said the husband.

"—it makes you feel—well, sick."

"You can't take it in," agreed the woman.

They brooded for a while in silence over the wastes of water endlessly revolving, and the hope stirred within me that the man in the mackintosh would put a question about the causes of tides. I am sound on tides myself, when not directly challenged on the subject, and know that the sun as well as the moon exerts a pull on the oceans and that when both pull together the tides are higher or lower, perhaps both, on the side of the earth they are getting to work on; more, I know that they pull the solid ground as well, drawing the coasts away from the sea so that the tides are even lower on one side than you would expect them to be on the other. But I can't explain it all now.

The man in the mackintosh, however, had had enough of the oceans. No sense in encouraging nausea. He let his agile mind roam over the wide field of human experience.

"What are these Chinese up to then?" he demanded.

The woman in the brown hat bent towards him, almost quivering with eagerness. "If you ask me," she said, "the Russians have got a spoke in that wheel."

Wheels are supposed to go round and round too, but nobody in the carriage, except me, seemed to feel sick.

H. F. E.



ANNALS OF A BRANCH LINE

vi—*The early morning milk train passing the old Clondcuckoo Creek tide-mill*



"Which twelve books would you choose if you were going into hiding from the police?"

No Connection

I AM a man who chooses a new garage carefully, often influenced by small and some might think irrelevant details; even so I sometimes make mistakes, and my last garage was one of them. They have sent me a bill for £39 19s., and will no doubt keep on sending it—though I suppose it isn't excessive for twelve weeks' work. I chose them because the foreman kept a straight face on seeing my car for the first time, but a series of later discussions with him (a series of twelve, to be precise) revealed that he was

entirely humourless. I believe the men who actually did the work roared.

To-day I chose the local garage at C——: it had long interested me by displaying a notice, "DO'NT FORGET YOUR OILE," and looked the sort of place that might have a connection for a sixteen-year-old pump. That garage in Kettering, chosen without due care, sold me a beast that perished.

The man who came out looked suspicious, as if he might be asked to do some work; but he did not laugh at my car, nor was his expression of gravity

so overdone as to be actually despairing. He was covered in oil, and was wiping it off his hands with a piece of rag. I felt confidence in him, and told him at once that I had come to live in the High Street.

"Oh, ah?" he said, and twitched up one side of my bonnet deftly. After a short glance he let it fall with a clatter. "Is that so?"

"Yes," I said. "But all I wanted——"

"And your name would be——?"
Ah, well. Country people have their

own methods. I told him. I hate telling my name. It usually puzzles in the south and has to be spelt; I was, in fact, beginning to spell it when he made a sudden exclamation and fell back a pace or two, level with where the handle of the offside rear door used to be. I realized presently that he was studying me keenly in the driving-mirror. Then he walked round the back of the car and reappeared by the shell of the nearside head-lamp, humming tunelessly.

"It's a long while," he said suddenly, "since we've had folk of that name hereabouts. Oh, ah."

I was surprised, and said so. I had thought myself the first B—— that ever burst into that silent C——.

"Some long while," said the man. He scratched his two days' growth of well-lubricated beard. "What you might call a bit of an old caravan, 'e had, up over by Little Cross. Conversion job, it was. What they call a conversion job."

"Indeed," I said, and revved the engine a trifle to point the urgency of my business.

"More of a bit of an old shack on wheels," said the man, wafting the clouds of purple smoke away with his cap. "Four years he'd been there, so you can tell what they was like."

"What was?" I said, like a fool.

"Why, the tyres," he said, giving one of my front wheels a kick that started the windscreen-wiper. "That's what 'e lived in, follow me?"

"No," I said. "And in any case——"

"It was a commercial ve-hickle, follow me? Converted for habitation on a ramshackle chassis. So when he calls round with his barrer——"

"Look," I said—"this is most interesting, but I——"

"'E was a dirty old buzzard," said the man censoriously, and waving a blackened hand under his nose added, "Pooh."

"My pump——" I began bluntly.

"Lived by the muck-heap. Old tins, bike frames, pram wheels. See 'im of an evening crawling about, ferreting out bits for his barrer. Then when 'e had to move to another field he come offering me the job." He snorted suddenly and twisted off a section of my rusty guttering. "Talk about a job. Anyways, I went and looked at it."

"Well," I said, "I wish you'd——"

"No," he said, shaking his head—"I shan't forget that name, never. Musician, he was."

"Really?" I said, my flagging interest stirring faintly.

"Banjo. Pubs, and that. Bit of poaching too, and holding 'orses, market-days. And the barrer. And

scrounging. Used to call in here odd days, beg an old shirt, bit of bread, want a lump of axle-grease, something of that. Wore an old billycock. Never seen without it." He was round looking in the mirror again, and his glance shifted imperceptibly to take in my shapeless black hat on the back seat. "They reckon," he continued, "that it was the billycock mostly that used to whistle?"

"Whistle?"

"Pooh," he said again.

"I see," I said, and added at a gabble: "My family are all in the Midlands. The name's very common there."

"Well, we got the engine going," he said, twitching up the other side of my bonnet. "Though you wouldn't have thought it possible. And we mended about forty punctures in the tyres, but of course when 'e got half a mile down the road they all popped off again. Then 'e wanted me to tow 'im on the

rims—but there: thing that age!" He dropped the bonnet with a crash and surveyed my car through half-closed eyes. "So in the end he left it. Just took his barrer. Didn't leave no address. Never got paid." He carefully chipped a paint-blister off the wing and fell back behind me again. I met his eye in the glass. "Very unusual name," he said.

"Not in the Midlands," I said firmly, and as firmly engaged a gear.

He came and put his face in at the window.

"He'd 'a' been old enough to be your dad," he said baldly. "It's still on the books, over eight pound outstanding, punctures, petrol and haulage. He was a dirty——" But my engine drowned him, my smoke choked him, and the upright of my door caught, I think, his face a little.

To-morrow I shall be searching for another new garage—and more the type of connection I have in mind.

J. B. B.



"The B.B.C.'s just given her another audition."

At the Pictures

Act of Violence—Passport to Pimlico

THE unfortunate title *Act of Violence* (Director: FRED ZINNEMANN)—unfortunate, because there is no reason why it should stay in the mind or, if it does, why it should distinguish itself



[Act of Violence]

... A FRIGHTFUL FIEND ...
Joe Parkison—ROBERT RYAN ;
Frank Enley—VAN HEFLIN

from other similarly uninformative titles of films each of which involves at least one "act of violence"—has been given to a notably well-made and interesting film on the theme of revenge. This theme—added to the fact that the ending is not conventionally "happy"—will make some people stay away; but anyone who does will be missing a very satisfactory picture, bristling with good acting and credible character and full of pleasure for the eye and mind.

It's interesting to see how often these relentless-pursuit stories make good films. This is probably not so much because the theme has a special cinematic suitability as because it is a theme that tends to appeal to men who can make this sort of good film... which, after all, is probably another way of saying the same thing.

At all events, this particular one is so handled by all departments as to give honest satisfaction to all—I wish there were more of them—whose enjoyment of a well-made film is not completely upset when a character in whom a certain amount of their sympathy has been aroused comes to a bad end. This character, played very well here by VAN HEFLIN, is not by any means a hero; the point about him is that he has (during the war, when he betrayed his friends in a prison-camp) behaved like a villain; but Mr. HEFLIN makes him a human.

understandable person, and the audience's wish is that his implacable and obsessed pursuer (ROBERT RYAN) shall somehow fail to get him. The pursuer, on the other hand, is no villain; it isn't as simple as that. There is in fact a reasonable and lifelike complexity about the whole situation, which is sharpened by the excellent everyday detail and the pleasing photography. There are (of course, in this sort of film) night scenes in wet streets; one begins to wonder whether such scenes could be done less than well, anyway; but there are also strikingly good scenes in those streets on the next morning, when it is windy and the pavements are half dry. This sounds trivial enough, but the added interest is remarkable.

The women in the picture have to worry and suffer: the fugitive's wife (JANET LEIGH), the ageing floozie (an outstanding performance by MARY ASTOR) who gives him shelter, the pursuer's anxious girl (PHYLLIS THAXTER). Nobody, in fact, has a very happy time—except the right sort of audience.

The British comedy *Passport to Pimlico* (Director: HENRY CORNELIUS) is such a refreshing delight that one has to guard against going overboard about it. It's not a great work of film art; as an aesthetic job, in fact, it doesn't approach *Act of Violence*. On the other hand it is a highly enjoyable comedy, the happy result of imagination (and not mere inventiveness) applied to a situation in which the possibilities are only a little exaggerated.

Given the absurd premise (that the authorities would at first accept as legally incontestable the "foreign" status of an area of London soil), the rest follows: all the story does is to explore with hilarious thoroughness what would be likely to happen in every department of daily life. Thought, I imagine, will convince most people that if such a situation arose, those who stood to gain from it would not get nearly such a long run before they gave in, and would indeed lean over backwards to avoid any suggestion of conflict with the law; but it is most acceptable to a present-day British audience to watch a number of pleasant and amusing characters suddenly freed from all present-day regulations and able to make whoopee. The basis of the story's appeal is wish-fulfilment, which is nothing against a light comedy. Lasting less than ninety minutes, it is so packed with imagination and lively incident that one feels at the end as if one has been happily amused for hours.

Among the films you may find at your local cinema this week is *The Queen of Spades* (noticed here on March 30th), a British film version of the Pushkin story, recommended to all able to take an interest in the way a film is made, photographed and acted. Those who prefer untroubled relaxation may choose the Bing Crosby lark *A Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (also noticed on March 30th), in which MARK TWAIN's story is visible from time to time through the Technicolor and the songs. Then there is *The Blue Lagoon* (noticed March 16th), also in Technicolor, the celebrated fable of the two children alone on a South Sea island. There's much good in this even for the hardened cynic (so long as he has an eye for a picture). R. M.



[Passport to Pimlico]

BURGUNDY IN BOTTLE

Mr. Pemberton—STANLEY HOLLOWAY ; Mrs. Randall—HERMIONE BADDELEY ; Mr. Wix—RAYMOND HUNTERY ; Mr. Straker—NAUNTON WAYNE ; Mr. Gregg—BASIL RADFORD

Platform Ornaments

IT is fairly easy to get speakers for a political rally, because most people like the sound of their own voices even better than other people do, but it is much harder to get a good selection of platform ornaments. By platform ornaments I mean of course the gangs of supporters who flank the speaker on the platform to show what a lot of friends he has.

The way the platform ornaments are dressed is of vital importance. In the old days it was thought essential to show that the Party appealed to all classes, and no platform was complete without a good sprinkling of baronets and working men. So that people could pick them out, the baronets were provided with large cigars and the working men with corduroy trousers and red handkerchiefs. At afternoon meetings duchesses were largely employed (easily recognizable by their tiaras), balanced by a smattering of working women. Getting hold of working women who looked like working women was always a difficulty, but it was usually overcome by providing them with very large hats of a peculiar shape, not the sort of hat that working women wore in real life, but the sort of hat that people who go to political rallies thought working women ought to wear.

Times have changed, however, and the great thing nowadays is not to convince people that the Party represents all classes, but that all its supporters are no class, because class is widely known to be a very shocking thing. So the platform to-day is decorated entirely with men-in-the-street and ordinary housewives. Suitable garments are usually available in an ante-room for any men-not-in-the-street or extraordinary housewives who may be called on at the last moment to fill unexpected gaps on the platform.

It is vital that platform ornaments should be thoroughly instructed in platform behaviour. A man who constantly crosses and uncrosses his legs, for instance, is apt to distract attention from the speaker. The wise organizer sits in the front row of the body of the hall, waits until the speaker is drinking his glass of water while he thinks what to say next, and then unobtrusively signals for all the men on the platform to cross or uncross their legs in unison. With an experienced team the effect can be very pretty.

Certain types of supporter are a dead loss on the platform and must be rigidly excluded. Many an otherwise



"And then in came the Fairy Princess, 'otly pursued by Prince Charmin', with Sunspot II a length and a 'arf be'ind."

successful meeting has been ruined by the presence on the platform of a moustache-sucker, a foot-tapper, a chair - creaker or a bubble - blower. Worst menace of all is probably the late-laugh, who sees a joke five minutes after it has been made and chuckles heartily when the speaker has passed on to a soulful quotation from Shakespeare or Cripps. Laughing should of course always be done in unison, like leg-crossing. Some organizers like to give the signal personally from the front row, but the disadvantage of this system is that organizers themselves do not always recognize a joke when they hear one.

The safest plan is for the speaker to scratch the back of his neck every time he unleashes a quip or quirk.

In these days of comparatively full employment it is becoming increasingly difficult to muster platform ornaments of good quality and in sufficient numbers, and there are rumours of an impending all-party agreement to recognize platform-ornamentation as an essential industry and to form regional platform teams on a professional basis. In the interests of economy all three parties would use the same teams, who would be drawn of course from the ranks of the floating voter.

D. H. B.



"And just one last question—does the Government pay everybody this fifty pounds travel allowance or do I have to claim for it?"

Notes on Gray's Elegy

IT is thought that the following notes may be of assistance to school children who have been set to learn by heart Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard."

1. *Title.* The word "Gray's" has caused much disagreement amongst critics. Some say that it signifies that the poem was written by a man named Gray; others that it was written near Grays in Essex. I incline to the latter view, evidence in support of which will appear later in these notes.

2. *The Curfew.* This was a large bird of the Jay family, now extinct. Fossilized feathers have been found near Ormskirk.

3. *Knell.* Misprint for "kbell."

4. *Lowing herd.* The herd were coming (or "winding") down a slope towards the river, and getting lower by that means.

5. *The Lea.* A clear indication that the poem was written (or at any rate conceived) in Essex.

6. *The plowman homeward plods his weary way.* This line should be particularly carefully learnt, as there are many permutations and combinations of these seven words, such as "The plodman plows his weary wayward home."

7. *Darkness.* The black-out was for the seven years' war. This definitely fixes the date of composition between 1756 and 1763.

8. *Glimmering.* Possibly will-o'-the-wisps caused this.

9. *Droning flight.* This was evidently some early type

of bicycle which the beetle was wheeling. The only similarity it bore to present-day models was its bell, the drowsy tinklings of which lulled the distant folds.

10. *Drowsy tinklings.* Metonymy. It was of course the beetle which was drowsy, not the tinklings.

11. *Ivy-mantled tow'r.* An example of cliché. Avoid this in composition.

12. *Heaves the turf.* I have had some difficulty in ascertaining why the turf was heaving. Perhaps there were moles underneath.

13. *Village Hampton that with dauntless breast.* Surely a very strained image. Hampton is bounded on the south by the River Thames, on the north by the Twickenham road, on the east by Bushy Park, and on the west by Sunbury. None of these can be called "dauntless." And, anyway, why drag in Hampton at all?

14. *Mute inglorious.* Ill-chosen epithets for Milton.

15. *Far from the madding crowd.* A line borrowed from Thomas Hardy.

16. *The brook that babbles by.* Another reference to the River Lea. "Yon wood" is of course Epping Forest.

These notes are necessarily incomplete, but large is my bounty and my soul sincere, and I shall be glad to answer any inquiries that are addressed to me.

The Papers in the House

IT took Mr. Barley and the visitors no time to decide that what they could see on the television set was not a play called "Love Me Little," but a tough slice of industrial life. Flying hammers, honest faces glittering above vats of molten metal, trolleys clattering, a smooth voice commentating away through the racket—everything contributed to the impression of actuality, caught rather than drama created.

The visitors were quite happy. Television was new to them, and one entertainment did as well as another. But Mr. Barley was cross. Putting his eyes again to the microscopic print at the foot of his newspaper he muttered, "Eight-thirty. Well, it is."

"But you can't be absolutely sure with television," said Mrs. Barley. "Even with all those knobs it's still a wonder of—"

But Mr. Barley had found the date on an untried top corner of the paper.

"I might have known!" he cried, flinging it to the floor. If he had been in a comic strip he would have jumped on it. "The papers in this house: Why are they *always*? And where is the 'Radio Times'?"

The rest of this article is an answer to Mr. Barley's questions.

The Barley day began by the papers not arriving before Mr. Barley went off to catch his train to London. It was indeed half-past ten before the usual wedge of *papier mâché* was worked an inch through the front door, and by this time the visitors (it was Saturday) had been sent to the village to fetch the meat ration. Mrs. Barley, who was in a brisk houseworking mood, dropped the papers on the chair in the hall and went back to the kitchen.

At eleven a vanman called with a dozen lobelias, a dozen aubrietias and a dozen antirrhinums. "What a nice lot of earth!" said Mrs. Barley. "Not mean, are they?" said the vanman. Both laughed merrily, and Mrs. Barley spread the day's newspapers on the hall floor to receive the plants.



"Yes, quite a good house-dog."

At half-past eleven the visitors returned with a piece of topside and a hunger for news. Mrs. Barley transferred the plants from the papers on the floor into a margarine carton and ran the vacuum-cleaner over the earth, tearing one of the front pages from top to bottom.

At a quarter to twelve Mrs. Barley, who was doing the sitting-room round the visitors, began to tidy the book-table, which was what she believed to be the name for the round thing with two shelves inside, one for papers and one for the odds and ends of literature.

"Would yesterday's *Times* be there?" asked one of the visitors. The grocer then rang the doorbell and when Mrs. Barley got back the visitors had all the papers on the floor, new and old. It was natural that when they jumped up to offer to do the potatoes for lunch they should shove them all back into the book-table so that they all fell out the other side.

At half-past one Mr. Barley came back from London bringing (it was a big day for sport) two editions of each of the three evening papers. At ten to two Pussy Cat Barley, drunk from a fish dinner, ran amok in the pile which had fallen out of the book-table and bit half the edges off to-day's *Times*.

Left alone in the house for a moment during the afternoon, Mrs. Barley had a fit of organizing energy and threw out every single paper not dated to-day. The rejects she put in a cupboard.

At seven Mrs. Barley decided to light the fire. Mr. Barley had finished in the garden and was now no more to the household than the extraordinary roaring noise made by someone else's bath-water running, so Mrs. Barley, who had no firewood left, got the rejects out of the cupboard and rolled some of them diagonally into fire-lighters. While she was doing this Mr. Barley came in for one of the evening papers to read in his bath and turned the whole of the sorted-out lot on to the floor with the old ones.

"Which is this week's *Radio Times*?" asked a visitor.

Of the conversation that followed it need only be said that Mrs. Barley and both visitors fell into every trap set by the publishers of the *Radio Times* and the solar system. Mrs. Barley knew to-day's date but was foxed by the tiny print at the top of the page. One of the visitors held that to-day was yesterday because her mother's birthday was

in a week's time and eight days further on, if they saw what she meant. Or six. The other visitor said he knew all about that and it wasn't, and anyway they were dealing in weeks, not days, and look at the cover. The other visitor said well, look at this about the play they had said that morning they'd miss because of the television. The rest of the argument, a matter of which visitor was more inaccurate than the other, rather went over Mrs. Barley's head because she was looking into the fire—it had burnt up nicely—at a blackening corner of what she now suspected to be the *Radio Times* in question.

It only remained for Mrs. Barley to sort out to-day's papers again, put them on the bottom shelf of the book-table and go into the kitchen, and for Mr. Barley, coming back from his bath, to pick up the small neat pile of old papers from the floor and put them on the top shelf to read after dinner before he put the television on.

ANDE

An Appeal

SING sweetly, bird, to the caged worker,
to the tired man in his office in the City.
Sing loudly, so that he may stop and say
Listen to that, George! Isn't it pretty?

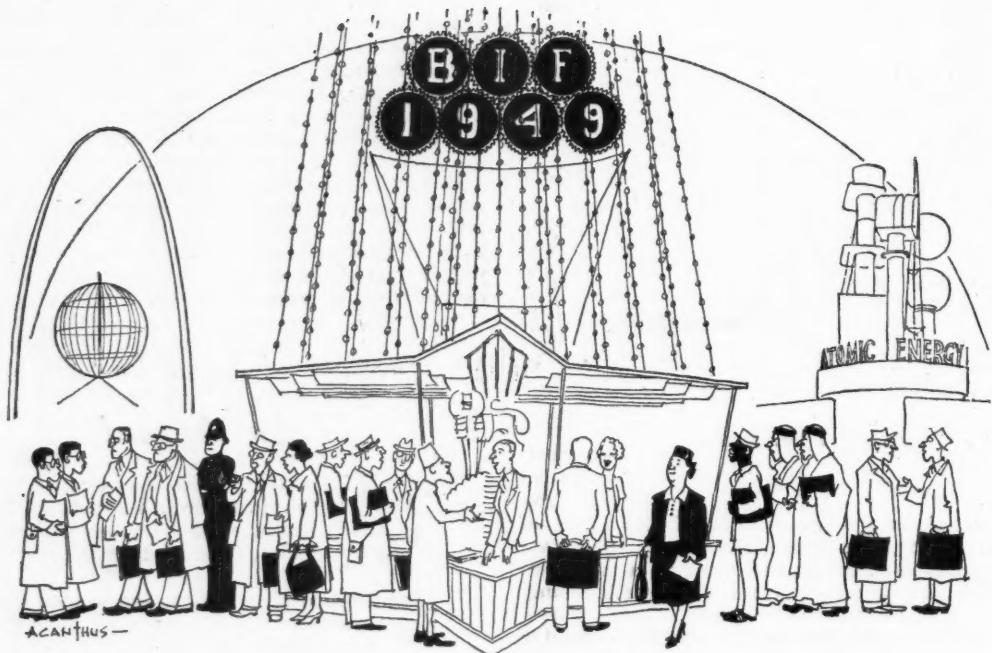
Strut, proud pigeon, along the window-sills,
let the sun shine on your sleek plumes;
coo, coo strongly, so that the sound of it
goes deep into the chocolate rooms.

And you, sparrow, fly slowly by
with bits of straw and fluff for your secret nest,
and if you are brave, hop in for a moment
to perch on the tin trays where the files rest.

Be kind, birds, to the caged workers
who have lost or forgotten so many Springs,
and who go home at even to other cages,
to put their bald heads under flannel wings.

V. G.





COME, my young master (and mistress too—you can bring her with an easy mind; it will only be window-shopping), let us put on our friendliest shoes and hasten to Olympia and Earl's Court, where our manufacturers stand in the market-place to entice and dazzle the world. To-day is not one of the three days on which the ordinary public are admitted—this isn't a fair in the holiday sense, but a serious matter of business—and we, greatly privileged in the murmuring, cosmopolitan crowd, notice an unusual hush in the bright, endless avenues of Olympia's Grand Hall. There are no children's voices. Even the toys and games section up above is peopled by heavy, thoughtful men: the face of that Turkish gentleman is grave as he blows into a small yellow duck and listens to the shrill quacking; will it appeal to the babies of Istanbul? He turns to a life-size cuddly lamb, and cuddles it; the salesman watches him earnestly; much may depend on yellow ducks and cuddly lambs.

When the B.I.F. was conceived in 1915, interest among manufacturers had to be whipped up by Board of Trade emissaries, vigorous young men who were sent round the country

explaining that the time was now ripe to capture the German markets; besides that, many of the things we needed to fight Germany had in the past been bought from her, and industry had to be prodded into awareness and activity. As a result, about six hundred exhibitors set up their stands somewhat half-heartedly in the Agricultural Hall; when they took them down again they implored the

for 1950; this year there are more than two thousand exhibitors in London alone—hence my hint about shoes—and ten more acres of them in the heavy industry section at Birmingham.

Talking, we have somehow got ourselves into the scientific section, where streamlined apparatus glistens on all sides; somewhere in this recondite region there are things that the ordinary mind can grasp, visual teaching aids to oust the blackboard, smoke-detectors, electric blankets, but in our search for them we are continually side-tracked. There, if we are to believe the show-card, is a spectrophotometer; we veer away, only to be confronted with a six-channel electro-encephalograph and an enthusiastic young salesman explaining how it magnifies the impulses of the brain a million times and jots down its findings with six little pens on a moving chart. Bewildered, but fascinated, we ask if we may have our brain impulses recorded, but the salesman prefers not to experiment on visitors, and we understand perfectly: a precision instrument has no social graces, and the verdict might be embarrassing. But he is delighted to talk about it, and about hospitals on the other side of the world



Board of Trade with one voice to make the Fair a yearly event; it had been a success. This year five hundred exhibitors had to be refused space, and two hundred of them instantly booked

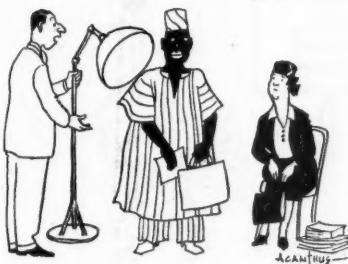
into which he hopes it will go. The flood of words released by any of these spruce young men on being asked a single diffident question is almost touching, they have waited so long to pour out their hearts.

But we hear music, and find ourselves irresistibly drawn. (Throughout the Fair it is noticeable that the displays embodying sound or movement attract more attention than the purely static exhibit, however artfully contrived. The model tin-dredge hauling its tiny buckets on Malaya's stand, the intriguing marionettes of a children's fashion-show, the loom that weaves as we watch—these seduce even the hard-headed business man from his intended objective.) Presently we come upon many organs; a comfortable, sober-suited man is playing one of them; he has a pipe, but the organ has none; it is electronic, and its powerful tone is making things difficult for the piano salesman next door who is doing his best to demonstrate a boudoir grand to a man in a broad-brimmed hat. We transfer to the piano stand sympathetically, and presently the salesman is able to inform us that he has sold fifteen pianos to Rhodesia; he bubbles on jauntily about laminated cases, synthetic resin, arsenicated hammers and other contrivances to defeat tropical heat and tropical insects, and tells us proudly of his firm's recovery: all through the war they were making instrument boxes—of a very different kind. And that is food for thought as we stroll on: that the knowledge and skill and effort now blossoming all around us in the form of clocks, linoleum, printing-machines, tennis rackets, picnic-baskets, jewelry, horse-clippers, toboggans, dinner services—everything from overmantels to bodkins (to say nothing of isotopes)—were for six idiotic years concentrated on knocking things down and blowing people up.

Look, we have stumbled upon an exit; our tour of Olympia is incomplete, but it may be some time before we stumble upon another, and a mural notice reminds us in many languages that (to quote one of the two that we understand) "L'autocar conduit MM. les visiteurs à Earl's Court." Let us allow ourselves to be conducted.

At Earl's Court we realize that we must lean on something, and eat. We lean by mistake on an Indian visitor who in turn is leaning on the bar (there are places to

eat in comfort, but comfort takes time); his eyes, dull beneath his turban as he dispassionately eats an English sausage-roll, become brilliant and smiling as he waves aside our apology, and we look forward to our first talk with a customer from afar. He is especially interested in textiles



(the vast principal section at Earl's Court this year) and although he says that it is a "good show," he wonders whether it is not perhaps too good; British quality is something many people cannot afford to pay for; they want something "more cheap"; he takes the lapel of our jacket and shakes his head flatteringly; we repress a comment on the smooth grey sheen of his turban, and say how sorry we are that he should be disappointed after travelling so far. He shrugs as if it were nothing, and, as it presently turns out, it is: he lives in Manchester . . .

The coal-black sergeant-major of the Nigerian Police is the real thing, at any rate. He has come all the way from Africa to stand impressively before his country's small stand in the Commonwealth section; he salutes us smartly, and points out with joy that his sergeant, four yards away, has only patch pockets on *his* uniform. Across the gangway is Pakistan, displaying, we note with faint surprise, cricket bats and bagpipes; nearby is Trinidad (rum), and Jamaica (more rum); opposite is Mauritius, showing exquisite

tortoiseshell of a quality we shall never see in our National Health spectacle frames, and adorned with the photograph of a dodo's skeleton (*Didus ineptus*), a bird native and peculiar to that small island long before it got into *Alice in Wonderland*.

Yes, yes, feet—we hear you. But we have yet to see more than three hundred textile stands, marvelling at what Britain has to offer the world, the fine damasks, the glowing crêpes and satins, fabrics cunningly proofed against the ravages of hot climates, porous dress shirts for jungle wear, and ties of a violence that would crack the flagstones of Piccadilly (but are never intended to be worn there). There are no indications of price, and we wonder whether the Indian from Manchester was right or not; the sales manager at one large and impressively-designed stand admits that his luxury lines are hanging back a little, but is not disposed to complain; he has been doing business, he says quietly, with a quick glance at a competitor on the other side of the gangway.

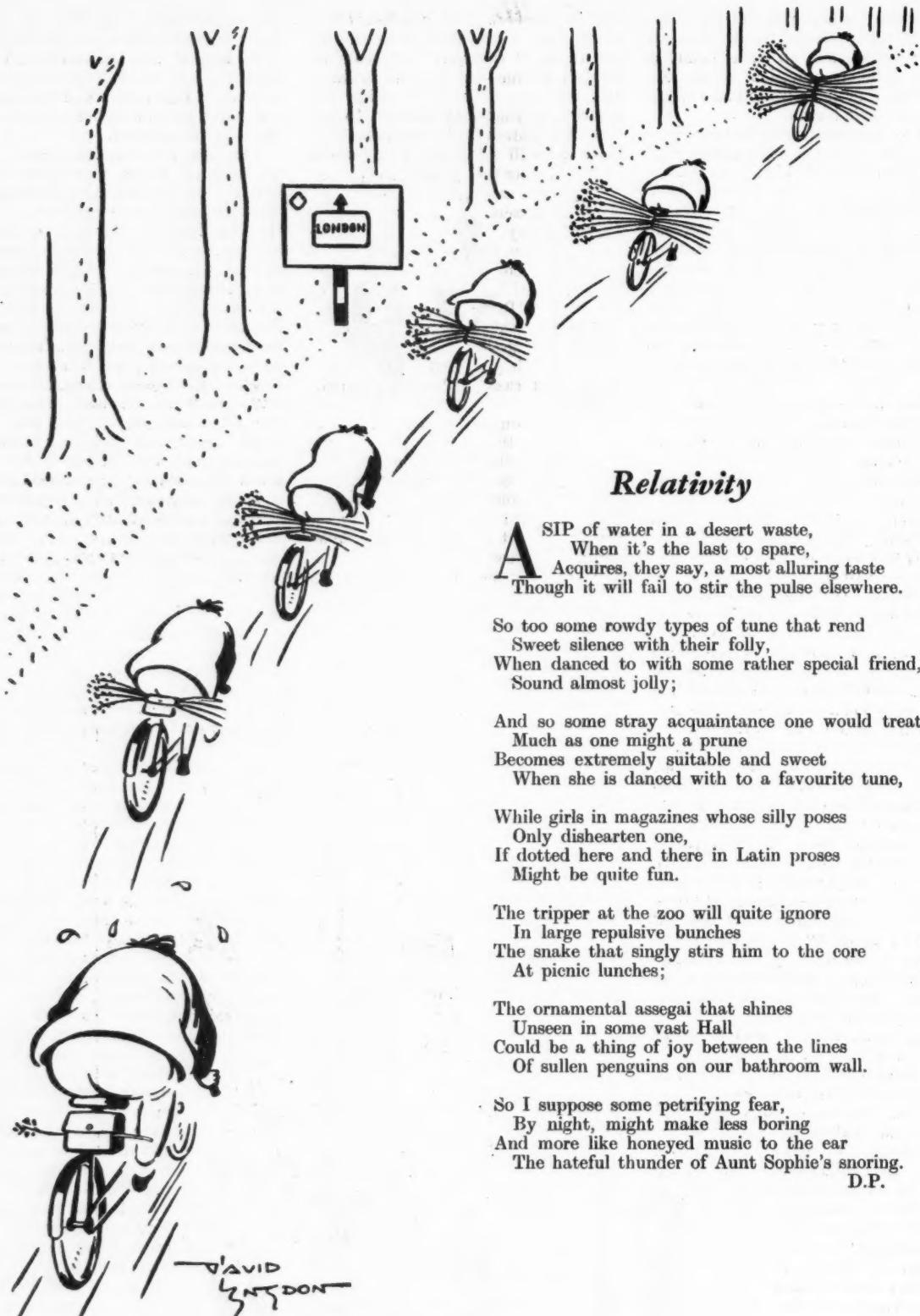
... We see from our plan that pottery, leather, foodstuffs, plastics and suction cleaners ("aspiradores a succión" to South American visitors) still await our attention on the floor above, but the time has come to sit down—is, in fact, long past. And we have promised to return to Olympia, to call in again at the exclusive Overseas Buyers Club; we want to hear what news there is of a buyer from Saudi-Arabia who, after applying at the club for a guide and interpreter early this morning, said he would walk round for five minutes on his own and by noon had not come back.

As we collapse once more into the autocar so kindly provided, let us spare a moment's admiration for the Director of the Fair* and his officers. Among other promotive activities they have since last August corresponded with one hundred and ten thousand overseas buyers by direct mail, splashed the cog-wheel emblem across the newspapers of the world in thirty-three

languages, and, having thus (and in many other ways) enticed the customers in their thousands, have spared no effort at this end to ease the transfer of their funds into British coffers. Let us indeed admire them. May their pains be rewarded, their hopes (and ours) fulfilled.

J. B. B.





Relativity

A SIP of water in a desert waste,
When it's the last to spare,
Acquires, they say, a most alluring taste
Though it will fail to stir the pulse elsewhere.

So too some rowdy types of tune that rend
Sweet silence with their folly,
When danced to with some rather special friend,
Sound almost jolly;

And so some stray acquaintance one would treat
Much as one might a prune
Becomes extremely suitable and sweet
When she is danced with to a favourite tune,

While girls in magazines whose silly poses
Only dishearten one,
If dotted here and there in Latin proses
Might be quite fun.

The tripper at the zoo will quite ignore
In large repulsive bunches
The snake that singly stirs him to the core
At picnic lunches;

The ornamental assegai that shines
Unseen in some vast Hall
Could be a thing of joy between the lines
Of sullen penguins on our bathroom wall.

So I suppose some petrifying fear,
By night, might make less boring
And more like honeyed music to the ear
The hateful thunder of Aunt Sophie's snoring.
D.P.

Wailing Woman

"**T**isn't everyone would think of this," we said rather proudly, coming out of the room backwards on our hands and knees.

They said no, they should think not, adding that those people who held that women ought not to wear dungarees "had" something.

We said we meant it wasn't everyone who would remember to stain the part of the floor by the door *last*, coming out of the room as they did so. Some people, we explained, had no more sense than to stain a floor the other way on, so that they were imprisoned for days on a small bare patch in the middle where the carpet was meant to come.

They merely said it was remarkable how carpets never fitted; if we moved many more times and went on as we were now going, we should end with a sort of small praying-mat in the middle of an acre or so of board.

"It isn't as though we were always getting bigger rooms," we said, puzzled, "or by this time we should be dwelling in marble halls."

They said well, that would save floor stain anyhow, they couldn't think how a modest fourth-floor flat could consume so many tins of it; and then suddenly squealed with delight as something fell through the letter-box. "Someone has written *here*," they said, "and we haven't even moved in."

"The trouble is," we said, looking back over our mottled tracks, "that everyone else's carpets didn't fit too, and they *all* put the stain on top of the one before."

"It's from Elizabeth," they said.

"If the first one had taken off the old stain, it might have been all right," we said, "but how can you start taking off five or six different layers all different widths?"

"She wants us to go to Carthage."

"The lease would have run out before you'd done even one side . . . Who's gone to where?"

"No one's gone anywhere. Elizabeth wants us to go to Carthage."

"*Carthage*? It's in ruins. Where the last one's carpet came will be a different colour from where it didn't come, much lighter. If it was the same all round it would look like a new idea. But it isn't: nothing like. Not if you measured properly where ours is going to come. Do you think you did?"

"In August. Charles says it won't be too hot."

"What won't be too hot?"

"Carthage in August."

"Carthage in August would be

boiling hot," we said. "Ancient hot ruins with women in long robes wailing 'Woe!'"

"Aren't you thinking of Troy?" they suggested. "And anyway it wouldn't still be: not now. I mean there are other things besides the ruins; and Charles says the heat is like the cold in Switzerland—you don't feel it the same way."

"How does Charles know? It was Burma he went to. Do you think this floor will do?" we asked, standing up painfully. "It makes you very stiff—and hungry—staining floors. Shall we go out and get a meal?"

"Not with you looking like something by Picasso in his blue period," they said.

"These dungarees," we said, "are historic. In them we fought the blitz . . . Well, in them we stood by in case we ever had to. We know," we said, "that they must in the first place have been designed for a very large-sized stevedore; but we are sensitive about these dungarees."

"You may well be," they said.

"And we are too exhausted for levity."

"*You would* come miles on a bus and try to stain everything in one go," they said unsympathetically. "Hurry up and put on the clothes you came in. What about Carthage?"

"It isn't everyone gets the chance to do it before the furniture arrives," we said smugly. "And you haven't said if it *will* do; you won't see all those funny marks when it's got something more on it than a rather disreputable pair of steps."

"Very nice," they said. "Perhaps you could even *bathe* on the beach Dido wailed all up and down."

We didn't reply at once. Then—"We can't go *anywhere*," we said, "for some time."

We understood them to mutter something about a rut, even if it was going to be on a fourth floor; but we weren't listening very attentively. We were looking at the pair of steps on their little oasis of dry board, and at our rightful garments slung carelessly across them.





"You will marry a tall, dark, handsome man who never stops arguing."

Adam at Night

EXCEPT at the making of Eve Adam slept
Not at all (as men now sleep) before the Fall.
Sin yet unborn, he was free from that dominion
Of the blind brother of death who occults the mind.

Instead, when stars and twilight had him to bed
And the dutiful owl, whirring over Eden, had hooted
A warning to the other beasts to be hushed till
morning
And curbed their plays that the Man should be undisturbed,

He would lie, relaxed, enormous, under a sky
Starry as never since; he would set ajar
The door of his mind. Into him thoughts would pour
Other than day's. He rejoined Earth his mother.

He melted into her nature. Gradually he felt,
As though through his own flesh the elusive growth,
Hardening and spreading of roots in the deep garden,
In his veins, the wells re-filling with the silver rain;

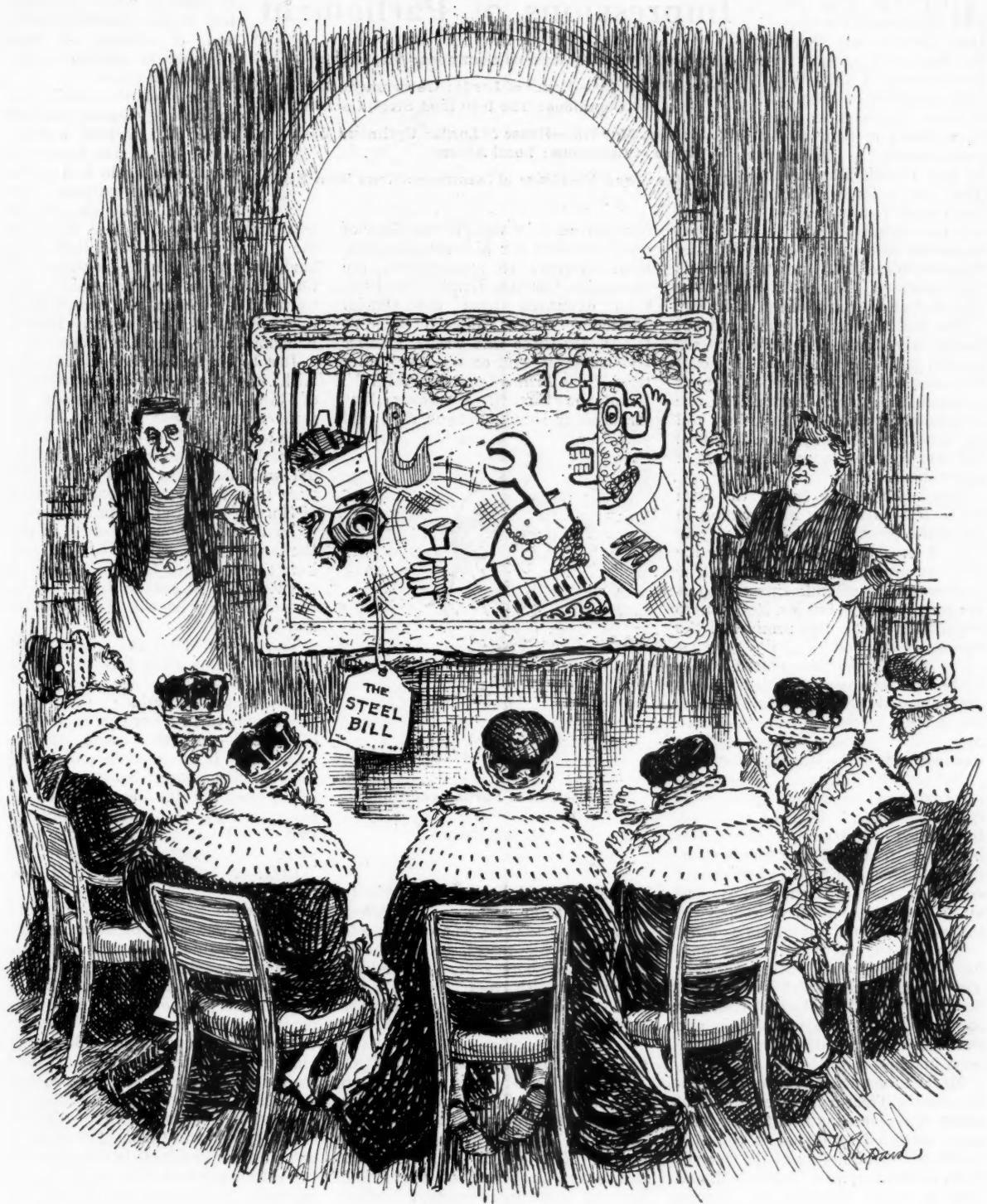
And thrusting down far under his rock-crust,
Finger-like, rays from the sky that probed bringing
To bloom the gold and diamond in his dark womb;
The seething central fire moved with his breathing.

He guided his globe smoothly in the ether, riding
At one with his planetary peers around the sun;
Courteously he saluted the hard virtue of Mars
And Venus' prodigal glory as he spun between them.

Over Man and his Mate the hours, like waters, ran.
Then darkness thinned in the East; the treble lark
Carolling aroused the common people of Paradise
To yawn and scratch, to bleat and whinny in the dawn.

Collected now in themselves, human and erect,
Lord and lady walked on the dabbled sward,
As if two trees should arise, dreadfully gifted
With speech and motion. The Earth's strength was in
each.

N. W.



IN THE WORDS OF SIR ALFRED . . .

MONDAY, May 2nd.—Members of the Opposition looked on cherubic Mr. WILLIE WHITELEY, the Government Chief Whip, with something of the morbid interest aristocrats must have shown in their brutal executioners, in the days of the French Revolution. This may have puzzled the casual visitor, but any regular attendant upon the faithful Commons would have known that the Opposition's collective expression was "in character," since Mr. WHITELEY was, in fact, in charge of the guillotine.

The fact that amendments, and not heads, were severed by the Governmental guillotine was of but little consequence to the Opposition. To your enthusiastic Parliamentarian the one is almost as painful as the other, and the consideration of the Iron and Steel Bill was resumed in an atmosphere of some strain.

The twice-nightly fall of the fatal blade was as regular as anything in the Paris precedent, and promptly to time it swished down, ending the life of many promising amendments. The parents of the amendments cried out in agony and rage, but Mr. Robespierre WHITELEY set his lips firmly and the execution went on.

As soon as the decapitated bodies had been taken away the debate went on again, only to stop abruptly a few hours later when the lever was once more pulled. And so passed another day in the life of the Iron and Steel Bill.

Before all this took place, Mr. ATTLEE had answered some more questions about H.M.S. *Amethyst*, imprisoned in the Yangtse River after having been shelled by Chinese Communist guns while on her lawful occasions. He told Mr. TOBY LOW that air cover was within thirty-six to forty-eight hours' flying-time away—but that the naval authorities could have had it if they had wanted it. The Premier reminded the House, however, that the ship had not been engaged on an operation of war, and that air cover would therefore have been inappropriate.

Mr. GLENVIL HALL, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, gained a general cheer by announcing that the Government intended to do all it could to facilitate the rebuilding of the Queen's Hall, in London, as a concert hall, and that he hoped it would not be long before work could be started. He seemed a trifle surprised by the volume of the strictly non-Party cheers this announcement produced. Nearly as surprised, in fact, as the Prime

Impressions of Parliament

Monday, May 2nd.—House of Commons: Steel Again

Tuesday, May 3rd.—House of Lords: Government Defeats House of Commons: The Iron (and Steel) Curtain Falls

Wednesday, May 4th.—House of Lords: Optimism Wins House of Commons: Local Affairs

Thursday, May 5th.—House of Commons: News from Berlin

Minister when he was given a cheer of equal strength for his announcement that, contrary to appearances, the expression "British Empire" had not been expunged from the Official Dictionary. It was still legal tender, so to say, for those who wished to offer and accept it, and so was that other term, "The British Commonwealth."

But he thought it wrong that terminology should become rigid and



Impressions of Parliamentarians

82. Earl Howe

doctrinaire, and favoured everybody using the term he or she preferred. Just to show that he, at any rate, was catholic in his tastes, he used *both* terms in a short reply, and added "Commonwealth and Empire" for good measure and yet another alternative.

TUESDAY, May 3rd.—The "go-as-you-please" theory applied to the name of the Commonwealth (or is it Empire?) prepared the House of Commons, in some measure, for the Ireland Bill, which Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, on behalf of the Prime Minister, formally presented to-day. This measure (which at least one honourable Member, having read it, contends should be retitled the "Irish Bill") was hopefully described as "clarifying" the position of the new

Republic of Ireland in relation to the Commonwealth, and of citizens of that Republic in relation to the United Kingdom.

The "clarification" ran to six long clauses, and left even the lawyers looking wistfully for wet towels as they went again and again through its provisions. The Bill said that citizens of

what used to be called Eire, living in the United Kingdom or in their own land, were not to be regarded as foreigners. Nor was their land to be regarded as a foreign one, even though it was neither part of the United Kingdom nor of the Commonwealth.

Just to emphasize that all this was Irish, it was made clear that citizens of the Republic who wanted to register as citizens of the United Kingdom could do so—but that it did not make the slightest difference if they did *not*! Two clear items in the Bill were that the constitutional position of Northern Ireland is "in no event" to be altered without the assent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland and that the assent of the Parliament of the Republic is not to be necessary to any change in the KING'S Style and Title.

The lawyers (and the wits) should have some fun when this Bill comes up for discussion.

When this interlude was over the House turned once more to the Steel Bill—and the swish of the guillotine. It came down punctually for the "first house," but as the time approached for the second batch of executions the Opposition announced that it did not intend to move any more amendments anyway, so Mr. WHITELEY took his hand off the lever.

But when the debate drew to its end there was a lot of shouting and counter-shouting which Mr. FRANK BOWLES, in the Chair, tried with firmness and tact to overcome. These applications of the velvet glove failing to produce results, Mr. BOWLES whipped the glove off and laid about him with the iron hand the Chair always keeps in reserve. He ordered Colonel ALAN DOWER to withdraw a demand he had made that someone should "sit down." Colonel DOWER said he had addressed it (as in duty bound) to a colleague who had been standing at the same time as the Chairman and had thus violated both letter and spirit of Standing Orders. But Mr. BOWLES held that the demand had been addressed to him, and that *it* thus, by flouting the dignity of the Chair, violated



"I've just made a most ghastly discovery—our cabin is right underneath the elephants!"

Standing Orders, and should be withdrawn.

The Colonel declined to withdraw what he had said and was promptly ordered to withdraw himself, which he did. Lord WINTERTON, armed with books of reference, later raised the issue whether an (unnamed) honourable Member's vote should have been struck out of the voting list in a division that ensued, and Mr. Speaker (who had arrived in the Chair) not unnaturally asked for notice of the question. Lord W. said he would raise the matter again.

In the Lords the Government suffered two defeats on clauses of the Landlord and Tenant Bill, both designed to do justice to small landlords who had to make do on rents that were still smaller. The Government did not seem unduly perturbed by the setbacks.

WEDNESDAY, May 4th.—

Although the Commons had quietened to-day, after their "night before," there was a certain jumpiness in some parts of the House. For instance, Mr. PHIL PIRATIN, the Communist, made a remark that was taken (and resented by the Opposition) as a reflection on a Colonial Governor. Mr. Speaker (coining a Parliamentary term) ruled that this was "clean out of order." Mr. EDEN suggested that, since the remark was out of order, it should be withdrawn.

Mr. PIRATIN at once snapped that he had no intention of withdrawing, whereupon Mr. Speaker said that in that case he would have to *order* him to withdraw. After some hesitation, and a good deal of *sotto voce* advice from his leader, Mr. WILLIE GAL-LACHER, Mr. PIRATIN did withdraw—without appearing to enjoy the meal he was forced to make of his words.

The debates were on local affairs, such as the right (or otherwise) of the Bolton Corporation to open a municipal hotel.

Over in the House of Lords a lively time was being had by all, with Lord CHERWELL (known to his friends as "The Prof.") asking some awkward questions about our economic position and throwing in a few caustic remarks about optimists. He said, for instance, that Government policy was one of many years' hard labour for all in the land and that the benefits thereof were "spurious." He added that the old piece about "too much money chasing too few goods" was no longer valid, since nobody had too much money, thanks (if that is the word) to "misery Budgets."

Lord CROOK said, with general approval, that to decrie the efforts of Britain's workers helped nobody—and that they worked harder and better than a good many others, anyway. To which his colleague, Lord KERSHAW, offered the postscript that the recent Economic Survey, by its frankness,

was a shining example of the probity of British politics.

Thus encouraged, Lord PAKENHAM, replying for the Government, was moved to express the view that there had been a great improvement in our national fortunes and that, "on the whole," the optimists had been right in the last three years.

Lord HOWE, who had been told earlier by Lord ADDISON that no date could be fixed for the lifting of petrol rationing, did not lead the cheering.

There was not a great deal of enthusiasm, either, for a statement in the Commons, by Mr. JOHN STRACHEY, the Food Minister, that everybody was now getting two and eight-tenths of an egg a week.

THURSDAY, May 5th.—Mr. ERNEST BEVIN announced the end of the Berlin blockade and the calling of a new meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers. He rounded off the announcement with a graceful tribute to the men and women who had made possible the miracle of the air lift.

Mr. CHURCHILL offered his congratulations to the Government on what might turn out to be a favourable trend in Europe's history, cautiously inserting a caveat to the effect that all our troubles were not, of necessity, over. Mr. BEVIN said an approving "Hear, hear!"

There followed a long debate on the situation in China.

The Cosmic Mess

THE film-folk fight each other across the Atlantic about their quotas, tariffs, blocked currencies, permitted dollars, and Heaven knows what. The British movie, protected by quota and tariff, nurtured by Act of Parliament, loved by the Board of Trade, stimulated by Government Loans, by Institutes and Committees, gets into more and more of a mess. Meanwhile, under Free Trade, the poor old theatre, which has been dying so long, still marches pluckily, though painfully, ahead. At the moment, it is true, the Free Trade is pretty unilateral. In London, at present, four large American "musicals" are showing, and four more, they tell this column, have been bought. There are also three other American plays. Total (excluding the "boughts") seven. And there is also a variety house where American artists, as a rule, top the bill, and win well-merited ovations. In New York, at the moment, there are only two British plays: but many British performers are hospitably employed, and some are highly praised and popular. The big thing is that no one is trying to strike a strict balance. No one, yet, is asking for a Quota, though, because of the American imports, there is a shortage of the larger theatres. Relations are friendly between the theatrical folk, and the theatre has not become the cause of an international squabble and a pain in the neck to the President of the Board of Trade. If there is any moral to be drawn from all this, the

uncountable readers may carry on, without charge.

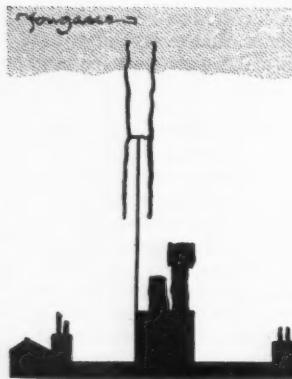
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This column hopes that its uncountable readers have not forgotten the Movement to restore the "squeam". And have not some of you a squeam or two about the "lurch"? How many of you—let us face it—have the faintest notion why you say that you have been "left in the lurch"? Where, and what, is the lurch? Someone told this column it is a thing you are left in at cribbage: but this column came upon a group of citizens playing cribbage and none of them had ever heard of the lurch. However, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* there is something in it. For the word is "used in various games to denote a certain concluding state of the score, in which one player is enormously ahead of the other: often a 'maiden set' or love-game . . . at cribbage, a game in which the winner scores sixty-one before the loser has scored thirty-one, in whist a treble." Lurch was also "a game, no longer known, supposed to have resembled backgammon." So now you know.

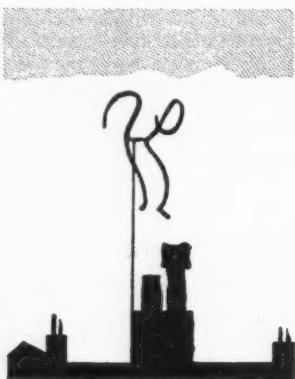
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Talking of words, it can now be revealed, perhaps, how that Mr. Haddock acquired his *Oxford English Dictionary*. In the year 1935, long before the General Election, and long before Haddock ever thought of standing for Parliament, a well-known firm of distillers asked him to write a page for a sort of booklet they were going to

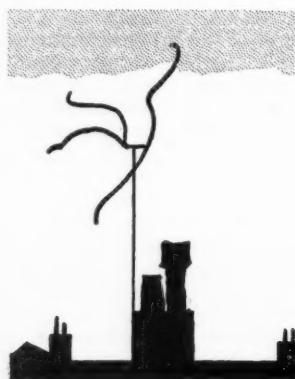
distribute in their numerous "houses", and offered him a by no means contemptible money reward. Haddock duly wrote a heart-felt attack upon the Licensing Laws, the Taxes on the Wine of the People, and so on. But, before the booklet was ready, Haddock, to the sound of cosmic wonder, became a Member of Parliament. He wrote to the distillers, reminding them how careful M.P.s had to be. A certain "Temperance" lady Member was always declaring that all those who disagreed with her were "in the pay of the brewers", and he would not like to start his Parliamentary career, however innocently, in that perilous condition. So would the distillers use his article if they still wanted it, but not use his name, and not give him any money? The firm replied that in the circumstances they quite understood, they recognized Mr. Haddock's high principles, and probably the Chairman would be writing to him later. Haddock cheerfully set off the cash against his easy conscience, and thought no more of the matter. Some weeks later a large van arrived with a present from the Chairman as a slight token of his esteem. And the present was the fourteen massive volumes of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, handsomely bound in red leather. Haddock says that he was so touched by this imaginative offering from a low-souled brewer that his principles gave him very little trouble. Indeed, he says, he would not have cared if all the Temperance Members *en masse* had seen the gift arrive. So, when the



"Good—



evening, everyone: we start this evening with a short programme of—



ballet, after which we take you to see the last period of the—



ice-hockey match between Tooting Tarzans and Chelsea Cheetahs: then at nine o'clock we go over to the Royal Albert Hall to see the—

uncountable readers of this column are refreshed or instructed by references to the *O.E.D.*, let them give thanks—to a distiller.

* * * * *
"His Majesty," says the Court Circular, "held a Council at 12.30 o'clock this afternoon.

"There were present: The Right Hon. Herbert Morrison, M.P. (Lord President), the Lord Citrine, the Right Hon. Aneurin Bevan, M.P. (Minister of Health), and the Right Hon. Lewis Silkin, M.P. (Minister of Town and Country Planning)."

Not, some may think, a very good attendance, and pretty unilateral in outlook. In *Whitaker's* admirable *Almanack* for 1948, the names of two hundred and ninety-seven Privy Counsellors are given. A very fine body of chaps they are, too; and it would be grand to see them all together in one place. They include Members of both Houses, Ministers, Mr. Churchill, the Archbishops, some Judges, Australians, Canadians, Field Marshal Smuts and the Aga Khan. A Privy Counsellor is, perhaps, the best thing a chap can be, except a member of the Order of Merit. It is a pity they have so little to do: and a wonder they do not throw their weight about a bit more. The Dominion Prime Ministers and Field Marshal Smuts could, presumably, stand up in the Council and say what they think about Commonwealth Relations. It is a form of Imperial representation, but we don't seem to use it. What is a "quorum" for the Privy Council? And can any Privy Counsellor pop in when he likes and keep an eye on the Ministers? Do they ever have a mass

meeting? Mr. Whitaker must tell us more.

* * * * *
All the Munnings horses would not induce this column to enter the controversy on "Modern" Art. But the following thoughts (if that is not going too far) have been provoked. Harsh things have been said about writers: but they do seem to dislike each other a little less than artists—and musicians. At least, if they are not more kind, they are more reticent. What the Poet Laureate thinks of younger writers is not known. He may think that they are unskilled, idle, and even barbarous. But he is not likely to get up and say so at a public banquet in aid of Literature. This column wonders too whether there is any chance of some jolly libel actions arising out of the slashing speech of the P.R.A. *Matisse v. Munnings* would be great fun: and the President under cross-examination would draw the town.

* * * * *
Certain hints that if the other side gets in at the General Election there will be "Labour unrest" have kicked up a dust among the professional classes. As a result, novelists and dramatists at a great Albert Hall meeting have declared that they will find it difficult to write under an uncongenial Government. Many doctors say that they will feel too frustrated to heal the sick in a Socialist State. The dentists' cry is "No Tories—No Teeth." And the bank-clerks, who for some reason favour the Liberals, say they will not handle our overdrafts unless the Liberals win. It all looks pretty difficult.

A. P. H.

Shelf-Examination

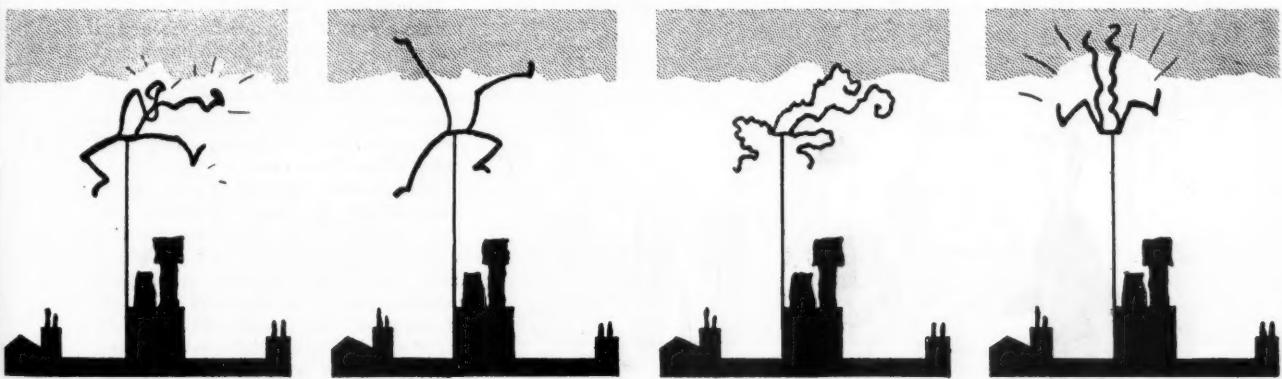
If the reviewer had said:
This is a book which deserves to be read,
I should have concurred;
But what he did, in fact, write—
Namely: This book will form a welcome addition to your book-shelf—
Was quite
Absurd,
And only goes to show
How little he can know
About my book-shelf.

For example, an attempt to find a home
For the confounded tome
Here, next to the wall,
Will immediately result

In Gibbon's decline and fall;
Moreover, to request my august assembly

Of Metaphysical Poets
To move up and make room for one
Quite obviously cannot be donne;
Nor would it be seemly, I feel,
To beg Borrow, or Steele,
To do likewise;
And any attempt to prise
Open a place on the shelf
Where Johnson (*Works*) and Jonson (*Plays*)

Pass their tranquil days
Is as useless as trying
To find a space between *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*.
In short, as I see the position,
The book will simply have to form one more
Unwelcome addition
To my floor.



finals in the boys' boxing championships, and, to end up, we bring you back to the Studio to see a short—

one-act play; this, we should warn viewers, is in the nature of a—

thriller, and is therefore not very—

suitable for children."

The Terror By Night

THE bland announcement by the British Railways Executive that they are going to provide more sleeping-cars for the public this summer fills me with dismay. What with the increase in the basic petrol-ration, and now this new development, it looks as if the death-rate in this country may well be doubled in the next few months.

It may be that the Executive are unaware of the tradition of violence that has grown up recently around the *wagon-lit*. One likes to think of these single-minded gentlemen, so devoted to their balance-sheets and their locomotive colour-schemes and their improved designs for sandwiches that they have not had an opportunity to find out how in every Stamboul Train, Rome Express and Sleeping-Car to Trieste murder, assault, espionage and breaches of diplomatic immunity are rampant almost continually from the *Speisewagen* to the guard's van.

There was a time when these manifestations were confined to Central Europe, where, after all, outrages of one kind or another are part of the daily life of the people. But there is evidence that the trend is spreading. For example, my newspaper recently gave a short account of a strike on the railways of India, which, it said, "failed completely," so that "services were normal everywhere." The paragraph went on to say that the only incidents recorded were in Calcutta, where "country-made bombs were thrown at a train"; and that stations, bridges and other key points were heavily guarded by police and soldiers, which is a very significant feature in a completely normal service.

In Central Europe of course the danger is worse because those responsible for the violence have not the same high principles to guide them. Indians, who have always expressed their preference for such simple commodities as home-spun cotton and salt obtained by boiling down sea-water on the beach, would obviously rather use country-made bombs if they could get them, even in Calcutta, which is of course a town. The secret agents to be met on express trains in Europe are very different, being callously unconcerned whether their infernal machines are knocked together in a cowshed on a little farm near Przemyśl or turned out in mass production by a sinister millionaire with a couple of villas at Cannes.

For the benefit of those interested, country-made bombs can always be recognized by the pieces of grass and straw sticking out from the edges of the dynamite.

In this country, owing to the fortunate circumstance that for the past ten years no one, other than a Member of Parliament, a Director of the Bank of England, or a bankrupt alien awaiting deportation, has been able to secure a sleeping-berth, we have been relatively free from this kind of terrorism on the railways. Of course there is the ordinary day-to-day terrorism, such as the wrenching-off of buttons and stamping-on of feet which we all indulge in if we travel during the rush hours; but nothing like the sustained villainy that you get across the Channel.

Now, however, with the prospect of sleeping-cars for all comers, there is a grim possibility that the infection may

invade our shores like a moral Colorado beetle. The most innocent and guileless traveller on the Night Train to Aberdeen will hardly have settled down on his bunk before there is a muffled tap at the door. "Half a tick!" he calls out, expecting the ticket-collector, and opens the door. In less time than it takes to tell he is bound hand and foot and left lying on the floor while mysterious strangers go through his compartment with a country-made fine-tooth comb, tearing the upholstery to ribbons as if they were patrons of the one-and-ninelpennies at a local cinema.

Only after the strangers have left and the traveller has cut himself free with his razor will he find the package for which they were evidently searching. Of course! It must have been slipped into the pocket of his dressing-gown by the glamorous blonde with the backless, not to say strapless, evening gown who joined him at dinner in the deserted dining-car on the pretext that she could find nowhere else to sit. Unable to restrain his curiosity, the traveller is bound to open the package and see what is inside. Great heavens! It is the secret plans for the Conservative campaign in the impending by-election at King's Proctor.

Even now it is more than likely that the steward who answers the traveller's summons for help will turn out to be a Conservative agent in disguise; who will hold him up with a rustic pistol, seize the plans, and make a dash for freedom through the luggage-van. Indeed, the only thing that can permanently eradicate the risk of further excitement will be the arrival at Aberdeen.

Impossible, you say? There are points about it that are far-fetched, I will agree—the blonde's finding a seat immediately in the dining-car, or the steward answering the bell—but we who have seen how voyagers fare in sleepers in Central Europe know what risky things they are.

It is possible that many passengers' sleep might be less disturbed, and many coaches' upholstery less torn, if special compartments were to be set aside for secret agents, glamorous blondes, and so on. Dummy packages of compromising documents might be secreted in easily-detected hiding-places, and the locks on the doors constructed so that they can be forced without causing permanent damage. However, these are details for the British Railways Executive to decide. At least they cannot say after reading this that they have not been warned.

B.A.Y.



"Anything else, sir—suit, overcoat?"



I cannot—



for the life of me—



see anything—



funny—



in the—



things—



foreigners—



laugh at—



Cddie Rogers

At the Play

Black Chiffon (WESTMINSTER)—*The Power of Darkness* (LYRIC)

NOT for some time has Miss FLORA ROBSON had a stage part so well calculated to show off the depth and range of her gifts as that of *Mrs. Christie* in *Black Chiffon*, Miss LESLEY STORM's study in domestic dissection, at the Westminster. This is an exciting

sensational dredging of family mud, or of going to prison. And prison it is.

The play is deeply moving in its careful understatement because it makes us feel all the time that, given similar circumstances, this is exactly how life might overtake us. And

sometimes they hang perilously on the very edge of burlesque.

Two Mr. PETER GLENVILLES have been at work on the version of the play at the Lyric. One of them, the resourceful producer, has done his best (apart from allowing house-doors to be left open, which must be a major winter crime in Russia) to remedy the failings of the other, the translator. This second Mr. GLENVILLE has put into the mouths of labourers such a sophisticated idiom that they never quite cease to be creatures of the stage. The tough old farmer, for instance, dying horribly—for that most graphic actor, Mr. HERBERT LOMAS, has the matter in hand—from the poison his wanton wife has slipped into his tea, exclaims “I feel awful!” and immediately the scene becomes a parody of Grand Guignol. Now and then, as in the meeting at the end between the village Don Juan, led into murder, and his lost love, sincerity triumphs, but certainly the play doesn't justify the imposing cast that has been assembled. Besides Mr. LOMAS, it includes Miss SONIA DRESDEL, unleashing a lot of darkness as the wife, Miss MARY CLARE as a crackling witch, Miss JEAN SIMMONS, acquitting herself fairly in her first stage part, Mr. STEWART GRANGER, impressive but emotionally limited as the tragic hero, Mr. HAROLD SCOTT, and Mr. FREDERICK VALK, booming from the stove-top as to the manner born. In a small part Miss MARY HORN quietly distinguishes herself. ERIC



[*The Power of Darkness*

CONVERSATION PIECE

Mitrich MR. FREDERICK VALK
Aniya MISS SONIA DRESDEL

Nikita MR. STEWART GRANGER

Akulina MISS JEAN SIMMONS
Matrena MISS MARY CLARE

and absorbing play which brings skilful writing to an accurate sense of the theatre, and Miss ROBSON's performance brilliantly conveys the mental agony of a normal woman driven into nervous breakdown by an emotional tug-of-war she scarcely understands. We have had our fill lately of neuroses on the stage, but here there are no glib echoes of the wrong end of Harley Street, Miss STORM and Miss ROBSON convincing us that *Mrs. Christie* might be the sanest of our friends.

Caught shop-lifting just before her son's wedding, she is relentlessly interrogated by a doctor who discovers hidden tensions under the comfortable surface of Chelsea family life. Her husband's bitter jealousy of her affection for her son has driven mother and son together, and the prospect of the boy's leaving home has preyed on her mind, though she likes his fiancée and has done everything to help them, until the mad impulse seizes her to steal a night-dress. What shall she plead? The doctor briefs counsel with the true facts, which it is thought will sway even a hard-boiled bench; but on the morning of the case *Mrs. Christie* sends for him and persuades him to withhold his evidence. It is a choice between spattering her son's marriage with a

the acting, beautifully geared by Mr. CHARLES HICKMAN to the strength of Miss ROBSON, fits the occasion; in particular, Mr. WYNDHAM GOLDIE's twisted husband, Mr. ANTHONY IRELAND's doctor and Miss RACHEL GURNEY's understanding daughter. Much more, I am sure, will be heard of Miss GURNEY.

TOLSTOY as a preacher saw sin and salvation in the bold terms of a poster artist, and on the stage this makes for the kind of flaming melodrama at which modern mockery has taught us, perhaps too easily, to laugh. He wrote *The Power of Darkness* to explode the ancient myth that the peasant is the natural repository of virtue, and since nobody knew the Russian peasant better it is no doubt a true account of the squalid goings-on which wrought havoc in the village home. At the same time it is crude stuff, moving bluntly from one resounding moral clash to another and these lurid situations (encompassing a rare catalogue of vice and crime and even including the murder and secret burial of a baby by lantern-light, in an atmosphere so charged with villainy that only hissing was wanting), are all so simply stated that



[*Black Chiffon*

UNHAPPY FAMILY

Thea MISS RACHEL GURNEY
Robert Christie . . . MR. WYNDHAM GOLDIE
Alicia Christie . . . MISS FLORA ROBSON
Roy Christie . . . MR. OWEN HOLDER

Ooc, Ooc

WHEN I was younger I started to compose crossword puzzles. It was so much easier than solving them, I thought. In those days I could still understand what crossword puzzles were about. They were for ordinary kindly people who did things for fun. There were good solid clues like a "genus of algae found in moist places." The answer, after one had rolled one's eyes around and murmured a few six-letter genera of algae, would suddenly leap to the consciousness—"nostoc." It was a fine feeling to get in before the other fellow and to hear his grudging and wary acquiescence.

My appetite for composing crossword puzzles was stimulated by a technically perfect effort which I stumbled on by accident when I was held up in an examination paper about two hours before time. The puzzle went as follows:

M	A	D
A	D	A
T	O	M

I remember making out the clues with intolerable pride and presenting the completed puzzle to my father to solve.

It is not too much to say that the success of this puzzle swallowed up a great part of my boyhood and made me prematurely old, for after that I started on my *magnum opus*. I wanted to make it as big and hard as possible so that my father could not solve it. I bought a big sheet of drawing-paper, marked off a square with twenty-five small squares each way, and painted in an elegant pattern of black squares. All I had to do now was to fill in the words. By ransacking the dictionary I found eight long words which formed a verbal frame for the whole puzzle. It would be easy, I felt, to fill in the missing words in the middle. I sat back and gazed with enormous satisfaction at those monumental twelve-letter words round the edge. I remember one of them was "quattrocento," but I don't know what it means now.

At first the filling in caused but little trouble, especially as I dodged about. Then gradually it became apparent that the black squares were in the wrong places; the pattern I had chosen was entirely unsuitable. Furthermore, the puzzle was too big. However, I persevered with pencil and rubber. In



"Of course, had we realized then how impossible it would be to get them out we'd never have let it unfurnished."

several places great rents appeared, while the rest of the puzzle rapidly became translucent. The most absurd combinations of letters kept infiltrating. Nor were combinations like "xgrovs" susceptible to minor adjustments. I used to page madly through the dictionary looking for words that began with "sochr" or ended in "pks" and similar eccentricities; but although I came across many remarkable words, there was none beginning with "sochr" or ending in "pks."

Now and again I had reasonable

luck. One section of the puzzle was very promising. Trial and error had really brought results. I was, however, suddenly confronted by an extraordinary word called "tanjib." Listlessly I thumbed my way through the dictionary. To my unspeakable delight I found that "tanjib," without any alterations, was "a kind of figured muslin made in Oudh." My heart warmed towards Oudh and its industrious inhabitants. Since then I have often wondered about them and their splendid little country. I always

picture Oudh as an oasis surrounded by waving palm trees, where thirsty camels pull up to fill their humps, and the inhabitants, looking up from their tanjib, greet the weary traveller with a soothing smile.

"Tanjib" left me with only one difficulty in that section; that was "ooc." I looked up the dictionary hopefully. After "tanjib" even "ooc" seemed possible. I had seen sillier-looking words than "ooc" in the dictionary. It sounded like an extinct bird. But there were no "oocs" in the dictionary. I could not alter this brilliant section because of an "ooc." I felt like taking a chance and putting it down as an extinct bird which could not cope with the complexity of modern times. If questioned I would hint at some remote source of information inaccessible to modern scholars. In the end my artistic integrity would not allow me to stoop to such a subterfuge. Besides, I knew my father would not believe me. He would want to see "ooc" in print, and I hadn't got the facilities. I then toyed with the idea of making "ooc" an exclamation of surprise or fear. I went around surprising and frightening people in many quaint ways, but nobody said "ooc!"

The crossword puzzle was beginning to tell on me. I often saw square black spots dancing before my eyes. "Ooc" kept running through my mind. I saw my mother talking anxiously to our neighbour after I had rambled through the house, wringing my hands and muttering "ooc, ooc."

After having unsuccessful recourse to several foreign language dictionaries, I felt that it would be foolish to cripple my creative energies by forcing them into the strait-jacket of a preconceived pattern, so I began to use black squares instead of letters. In this way I was able to rid myself of "ooc." The middle "o" was eliminated by a black square and "burro" became "burr." I slept better that night; but even though I tried to excuse my behaviour, I realized with a sinking feeling that I had forsaken the high ideals of my calling.

A great tide of black squares encroached everywhere. Little islands of prepositions and abbreviations clung to each other desperately to avoid the flood which surged at their feet. I thought that "quattrocento" gained an added dignity from its isolation. Mad Tom and Ada, whom I had thoughtfully incorporated, looked like

castaways beset by an inky main. But my *tour de force*, the "tanjib-burr" section, withstood the shock with fine resolution and spurred me on to finish the puzzle.

I now know why there are so many black squares in most crossword puzzles.

• •

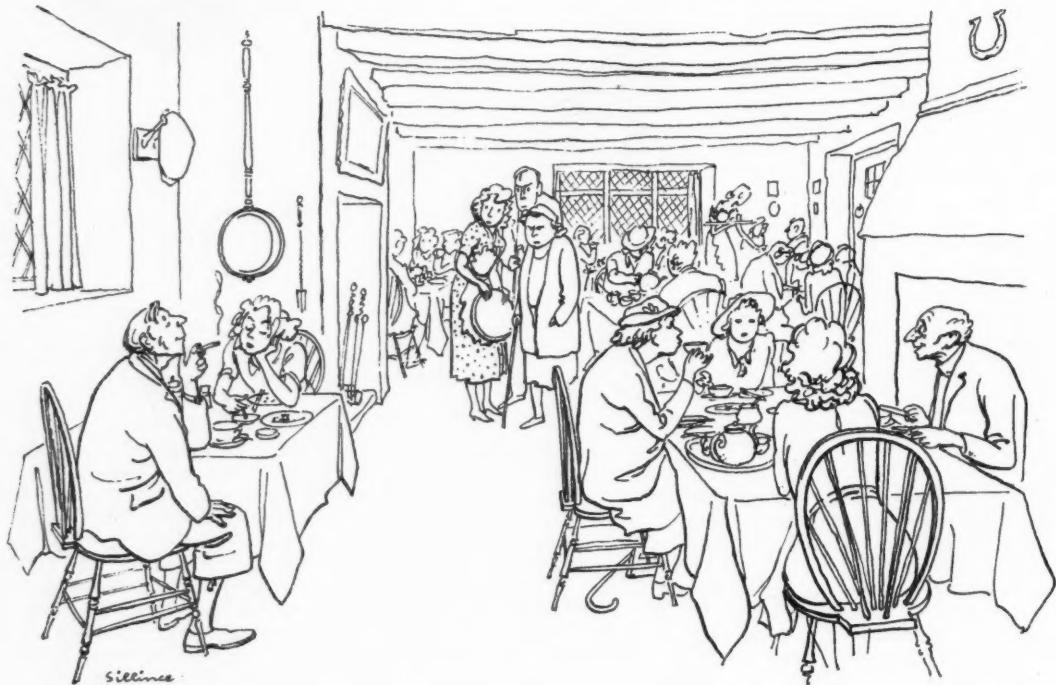
Sweet Laundrymaids

SWEET laundrymaids
That for keepsake
With strange keen blades
My buttons take;

Whom passion rocks
(So dare I think?)
To wash my socks
Until they shrink;

Who with my wear
Fold pretty pledges—
This lace affair
With frilly edges;

Sweet rogues and sly,
By laund'ring bored,
DON'T TRICKSY MY
PYJAMA CORD!



"There's a table you can have if you don't mind scowling for a few minutes."

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Stories of England and of Russia

THERE seems to be no doubt that war stirs up fresh interest in books about the country, for the discovery of rustic pleasures by townsmen stationed in remote places is added to the nostalgia of those on foreign service. Since the latest war the difficulty of going abroad has tended to keep this interest undiminished. Making these points in his introduction to *English Country Short Stories*, Mr. Ronald Lewin suggests that the expansion of towns provides a deeper urge drawing the modern reader steadily to rural writers. Genuine peasant life is certainly being rapidly crushed out by science and the force of world economics, crafts and customs are being swept away by the tide of mechanical invention, and as this movement continues what survives unspoilt becomes infinitely more precious.

I find it less easy to believe in Mr. Lewin's contention that the townsman can sate his rural hunger better with fiction than with the work of purely descriptive writers, for to me Cobbett and Jefferies and Lord Grey, to mention only three who had the true feeling for the things we are losing, bring as satisfying a breath of fresh air as any of the story-tellers. Whether you agree with him in this or not, however, I think you will find his selection discerning and representative. It is confined to England and ranges from Hardy—a rather wooden piece, weighted with long and heavy words, describing a night spent digging in a storm-swept Roman camp—to one of the newest and most promising of our country authors, Leslie Paul, whose "The Duck Shoot" catches dramatically the misted loneliness of the East Anglian saltings.

Two of the stories treat, very differently, nature's revenge on man's interference: Galsworthy's grim "Timber," in which a profiteer of the first war who has sold his trees is trapped by them on a night of ice, and Lord Dunsany's "The Walk to Lingham," a hair-raising account of a man pursued down an avenue of doomed poplars by the most furious of them all. Kipling's "An Habitation Enforced" comes first and compares well with anything in the book. It is a brilliantly observed study of an American couple gradually enmeshed in the deceptive web of feudalism, and liking their defeat in spite of themselves; the irony is charmingly light and beautifully fair to both sides.

Coppard is here with "The Field of Mustard," H. E. Bates with "Death in Spring." Among other distinguished names are William Plomer, T. H. White and H. A. Manhood. Nearly all the stories that Mr. Lewin has gathered are distinctly good, and between them they give widely varied glimpses of the rich tapestry of the English scene as it was, and even, in the case of the wilder counties, as it still miraculously is. One of the special merits of the collection is that it is drawn from most corners of the land, as readers with an ear for dialect will quickly discover. To those in a room with no view it is particularly recommended, but anyone who cares for the country should welcome it.

A smaller focus on a more patriarchal form of rural life is to be found in another collection of short pieces, Ivan Bunin's *Dark Avenues*, ably translated by Mr. Richard Hare. They deal with Russia at the end of the last century, when their author, who is still working, was a young man, and though their constant theme is love of one kind or another they yet reflect with the utmost vividness the insulated, introspective lives enjoyed with indulgent melancholy by the owners of large estates and their families.

Bunin, a Nobel Prize winner and the writer of that

superb story, "The Gentleman from San Francisco," deserves to be far better known in England, for he is a master of the detached presentation of delicately defined states of mind. His method is to pile up detail until you feel you are a part of his characters, to deliver the *coup de grâce* with overwhelming economy, and then, very often, to supply in a single paragraph, separated in time perhaps by many years from his main situation, a complete commentary on its significance. Not only has his writing emotional subtlety but also a wonderful power of description. He can conjure a winter landscape, a dilapidated village, a stuffy squalid room without the waste of a word.

The stories in this collection have all been written since 1938, in exile in France. Some of them compress effectively into as little as two pages the material for a novel. Some are very frank, the author's passion for exactness driving him occasionally to quite unnecessary lengths, but always there is the saving compassion and humanity of a great artist.

One is apt to get the impression from its pre-Revolutionary literature that Russia used to be peopled entirely by aristocrats and peasants, and it is interesting to come on a new novel describing the life and household of a rich merchant and his socially ambitious wife. *Fienka* is by another exile in France, Vladimir Krymov, and although his story is without much light and shade I found it growing on me with the slow insidiousness of the landscape of the Fens. The sketches of provincial character are excellent, and I would commend the book more warmly if much of it were not in colloquial conversation translated by Mr. Malcolm Burr with irritating infelicity. ERIC



"You'd never DREAM it was a radio, would you?"

Critical Moments

Under the heading of *The Progress of a Biographer* Mr. Hugh Kingsmill has collected some forty brief papers. Many of them are book-reviews and their subjects range from Wodehouse to Rilke, from Max to Marx. But they have the unity given by a consistent point of view; Mr. Kingsmill always tests the particular instance by the general principle. What he looks for in a writer is integrity in both its senses, wholeness of personality and honesty of expression. He distinguishes nicely between the individualist and the egoist, and has a keen eye for the false emphasis of the maladjusted. His standards make him an exacting critic—he can even be savage when he contemplates Kipling or the Will to Power—but his severity is enlivened, if not tempered, by a pretty play of epigram. His title-piece, in which he analyses the impulses behind his own various essays in an art which he has practised with distinction, makes an interesting fragment of autobiography. He is illuminating on the ambiguities of Harris and Shaw in re Wilde, on which he has inside information; and some personal reminiscences of Yeats furnish an entertaining interlude.

F. B.

The Vicar Reflects

A keen Anglo-Catholic, taking over a Norfolk living in the year of "Papal Aggression," 1850, strikes one as looking for trouble. But *A Norfolk Diary* not only shows the Rev. Benjamin Armstrong holding his own against his third and worst bishop, but completely winning over his parish. It is to be regretted that his grandson, the Rev. Herbert B. J. Armstrong, who has been so generous with the delightful jottings of thirty-eight years, should have omitted all the pre-East Dereham days and confined his glimpses of the lovable and discerning diarist to social life, pastoral life and the horrid repercussions of the outside world. The vicar's wife is "Ann Rebecca," *et præterea nihil*. His five children are lightly indicated by an occasional bout of nettle rash. But we hear a good deal about his Brontëesque fellow-clergy, of whom one—Bulwer Lytton's cousin—was an accomplished amateur tinker. We also share the liturgical glory—even the "warmth and comfort"—with which his Ritualistic candles endowed his unheated church. His (to him portentous) age provides such ominous noises "off" as the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny, the Commune, the

Risorgimento—and, finally, the Mahdi: with, nearer home, the rumoured compilation of a Book of Common Prayer by the Prince Consort and a genuine Socialist threat to decimate the Lord Mayor's Show.

H. P. E.

A Modern Faust

In *Dr. Faustus* Thomas Mann uses the inexhaustible Faust myth to symbolize the condition of Germany from the aftermath of Bismarck to the crash of Hitlerism; through the voice of this old, distinguished, passionate humanist, the nineteenth century criticizes the primitivism of its successor. The novel is of course one more plea for the "other Germany," but a most convincing one—not least because it is addressed to Germany herself. It takes the form of a biography of a musician, a Schönbergian figure who sells his soul to a very Teutonic Lutheran devil in return for twenty-four years of creative genius. The story is told by his friend, a prosy schoolmaster and student of philology, who is setting down his recollections as the second world war sweeps up to and across his country. It is a solid, rather old-fashioned novel of ideas, with tremendous arguments on musical history and theology and philosophy, diversified by set pieces of natural and social description and a "gallery" of minor characters neatly involved in minor plots. As fiction it is satisfying and respectable rather than exciting; there is one interesting technical device, the use, for the "possession" theme, of sixteenth-century language, brilliantly rendered in Mrs. Lowe-Porter's translation. What gives the book its power is the intellectual passion behind it. It reveals a devil who is no mere external threat but is immanent in our music, science and politics, catching in its mirror the devil who looks out through the reader's eyes. R. G. G. P.

Books Reviewed Above

English Country Short Stories. Introduction by Ronald Lewin. (PAUL ELEK, 12/6)

Dark Avenues. By Ivan Bunin. (JOHN LEHMANN, 9/6)

Fienka. By V. Krymov. (ALLEN AND UNWIN, 12/6)

The Progress of a Biographer. By Hugh Kingsmill. (METHUEN, 10/6)

A Norfolk Diary. Edited by Rev. Herbert B. J. Armstrong. (HARRAP, 12/6)

Dr. Faustus. By Thomas Mann. (SECKER AND WARBURG, 15/-)

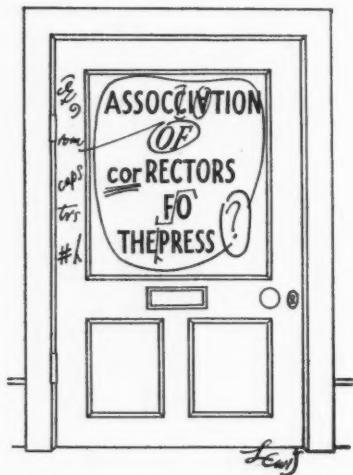
Other Recommended Books

Alphabetical Order. By Daniel George. (CAPE, 15/-). "For the diversion and solace of the ruminant reader": Mr. George's individual anthology *Pick and Choose* (1936) revised, with the addition of "An Alphabet of Literary Prejudice," extracts from his notebooks, and fragments of autobiography—a very entertaining miscellany.

No Bridge to Yesterday. By Hilda Brighten. (GOLLANZ, 12/6). Family and social recollections, for the amateur of Victoriana and Edwardiana; gossipy and easy to read, with helpfully large type.

Genuine and False. By Hans Tietze. (MAX PARRISH, 10/6). Copies, imitations and forgeries in art; 73 reproductions in colour and monochrome, with an entertaining informative text on the history and methods of forgers.

Death of Jezebel. By Christiana Brand. (BODLEY HEAD, 8/6). Bright murder story by the author of *Green for Danger*: Inspector Cockrill solves the mystery of a death at a pageant. Horrible bodies very chirpily described.



Bookmaker Sandwich

MY main purpose in putting pen to paper to-day is to reproduce a remarkable recipe which I have just discovered among the works of the great Escoffier, sometime chef of the Carlton Hotel. Some preamble, however, is absolutely necessary, if only as an aperitif; for the moment I will merely implore any bookmakers in the audience not to go away.

In 1935 the Millers' Mutual Association decided to spend £100,000 a year on advertising designed to increase the consumption of bread. The campaign (which for all I know is still alive) was based on an unqualified and persistent glorification of the humble sandwich, and achieved considerable success. The sandwich is by no means everybody's meat. It is neither particularly colourful nor photogenic—and it cannot, by its very nature and significance, be raised from pictorial mediocrity by an attractive *mise en scène* of bright accessories. The sandwich is usually condemned to blanch unseen beneath layers of grease-proof paper or to lie inert and shabby under the glass bell of the railway buffet. The best that can be done for the sandwich's appearance is to lend it a certain geometric interest by shaping it into triangles or diamonds and to garnish it with a sprig of parsley. All the more credit then to the Millers' Mutual Association for their efforts to raise the status of the sandwich.

The sandwich, as everybody knows, belongs to a group of everyday words—including mackintosh, nicotine, doily, tarmac, brougham and wellington—which achieve a certain distinction by reason of their readily comprehended etymology. It was invented in the eighteenth century by John Montagu, fourth Earl of Sandwich, and as a time-saver must be regarded as the precursor of the automat and the self-service counter. Yet it is not by any means devoid of functional defects. I should say that the most undesirable feature of the sandwich is its inability to advertise its individuality when stacked on a plate. This weakness is particularly noticeable when the sandwich is thin or delicate, but there can be few people who manage to take any sandwich from a plate without sliding their fingers under the top layer of the sandwich beneath and tearing it bodily from its mate. There appears to be no code of behaviour suitable for meeting such a contrempts. Some people apologize profusely, detach the supernumerary slice of bread from their haul and press it back firmly over the

exposed filling. Others, more finical, discard the odd slice as a gesture to Hygiene. And others again, the realists and materialists, suppose that they'd better take the other half too, ha-ha! One result of all this is that a pile of sandwiches is seldom eaten down with anything resembling precise stratigraphy, but tends to disappear in such a way that there is always an uncovered filling on view. Another thing that etiquette has not yet decided is whether or not a guest may peek under the corner of a sandwich to see whether it contains cucumber, though it must be admitted that Nature connives at the practice by curling the corners of all sandwiches which have been on exhibition for more than fifteen minutes.

The incredible difficulty of the task that the Millers' Association set themselves can be gauged from the fact that the great Escoffier (Gather round, bookmakers!) devotes only eleven lines to sandwiches and their preparation in a book—the famous *Guide to Modern Cookery*—of eight hundred and ninety-one pages. He dismisses them with the most perfunctory reference to their size and shape. On the other hand—and to my mind it is adequate recompense—the master does find enough space to quote Suzanne on the "Bookmaker Sandwich":

"This kind of sandwich which is liked by racing people is a most substantial affair, and it will be seen from the following recipe that a sandwich of the nature prescribed might, in an

emergency, answer the purpose of a meal.

"Take an English tin-loaf, and cut off its two end crusts, leaving on them about one-third inch of crumb. Butter these crusts. Meanwhile grill a thick steak, well seasoned with salt and pepper. When it is cooked, cool it; sprinkle it with grated horse-radish and mustard, and lay it between the two crusts. String the whole together as for a galantine, and wrap it in several sheets of blotting-paper. Then place the parcel under a letter-press, the screw of which should be gradually tightened, and leave the sandwich thus for one half hour.

"At the end of this time the insides of the slices of bread have, owing to the pressure, become saturated with meat juice, which is prevented from escaping by the covering of crust. Remove the blotting-paper, and pack the sandwich in a box or in several sheets of white paper."

There, how's that? I invite the Millers' Mutual Association to disregard the steak for the moment and to concentrate on the bread. Clearly, the way to sell more bread is to stimulate interest in the plane surfaces of a loaf instead of the cubic capacity—that is, in the crust instead of the crumb. A nation of bookmakers would use more loaves than the M.M.A. could possibly supply. And the same would apply of course to a nation which by clever advertising had lost its heart to Bookmaker Sandwich.

HOD



"For Pete's sake put a washer on this confounded tap before the place gets flooded."

Portance in My Travel's History

HERE were about fifty yards of us waiting at the bus-stop, and I was a back-marker. With mad improvidence I had already read my evening paper through, but I read it through again—even the Small Ads. and the City Prices. After that I got conversational with my neighbours, and we told one another what we thought of buses. "Quicker to walk," we said gloomily. "Been waiting a solid hour," we lied. "We'll write to the papers about it," we threatened. "Sometimes wish we'd all lived a hundred years ago," we sighed.

And, certainly, a hundred years ago it was the simplest thing possible to get on a bus. In fact it was much more difficult *not* to. I take as my authority an article in the *Penny Magazine* for 31st March, 1837:

"The worst defect of many of the omnibuses is their alternate rapid driving and halting. The driver and he who hangs behind—who opens the door and receives the money, and whose name, borrowing from the French, is 'conductor,' or, in the vulgar tongue, 'cad' . . . are seldom disposed to move on with a half-empty omnibus. The one holds up his whip significantly, the other scans the pavement on either side to see if he can detect among the passengers any willing to fill the vacant place in his machine."

You see? You didn't wait for the bus—the bus waited for you. When has London Transport found it necessary to tout for customers at bus-stops, or to post employees around Piccadilly Circus to solicit patronage for the Underground? As for reluctance to move on with empty places, most of us would go to the stake for our conviction that the driver and conductor consider it their greatest triumph if they can roar past a surging bus-stop with a half-empty bus.

None the less, the national tradition of criticizing the bus-service for something or other seems to have been in full swing even then—even in 1837, when on the south side of the Thames were "a great number of districts and villages which a few years ago presented fields and lanes between them; but which are now, by the filling up of their interstices, beginning to lose all appearance of country." It was only seven years since the first omnibus had

made its debut in the streets of London, but the note of acrimony is plain. I continue to quote:

"A great enjoyment and convenience they [the omnibuses] are, undoubtedly; and if they were a little better regulated in their movements, if the characters of drivers and conductors were raised a little higher (efforts are being made towards this) and less cause of complaint given by furious driving, or by uncivil conduct, or by attempts at imposition, they would form one of the most satisfactory of our social improvements which have been introduced in modern times."

(Another social improvement which had failed to make the grade one year earlier was a "steam-carriage" on the road from Paddington to the Bank: "It was at once startling and amusing to see the ponderous machine wheeling along, as if by magic, carrying from fifteen to twenty persons . . . and travelling at the rate of from eight to

ten miles an hour. From whatever cause, the experiment was abandoned.")

It seems only fair to record that the disgruntled *Penny Magazine* did not have it in only for omnibuses:

"From the immense number of public vehicles of every description which throng the streets of London, it cannot but happen that complaints will arise, and that frequently these complaints are just. The conduct of drivers and others connected with stage-coaches and hackney-carriages is far from being perfect. Public opinion is, however, operating on them; and really, when we consider the temptations to drinking to which these men are exposed, under the varied changes of the atmosphere—their defective education, which is wholly of an external kind, scarcely ever leading them to *reflect*, we cannot always wonder at their occasional deficiencies in the proprieties of behaviour."

Not without satisfaction the *Penny Magazine* records that in the two years 1833 and 1834 there was a total of three thousand five hundred and thirty-six complaints made at different London police offices against drivers and proprietors of short stages, omnibuses, hackney-carriages and cabriolets. "In about two-thirds of the entire number of cases, the offending parties were prosecuted to conviction, and fined in sums varying from 1s. to 3l., and in a few instances as high as 5l. The other causes of complaint were either not proved or abandoned. The general character of the offences is: insulting behaviour, overcharges, drunkenness, obstructing the street or road, furious driving, and racing with each other."

But at least it is clear that a hundred years ago you could always get a seat in an omnibus, even though the minimum fare was sixpence. Or could it be that the people of 1837, not caring overmuch for insulting behaviour, overcharges, drunkenness, obstruction, furious driving, and racing, preferred to walk?

• • •

The Admirable Miss Crichton

"With him will sit an East End schoolmistress, Britain's first woman K.C., and a former Welsh rugby international."

Evening paper

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with anticipatory pleasure, secure in the knowledge that Disraeli would, in the fullness of time, christen his invention 'the gondola of London.' Once launched upon the gas-lit streets, this graceful fleet of hansom conveyances, Peerage, Gentry and Toffage about their nocturnal occasions, cigar smoke wreathing opulently through the skylight.

"A sovereign if you drive me to a bottle of Schweppes, Cabby!"

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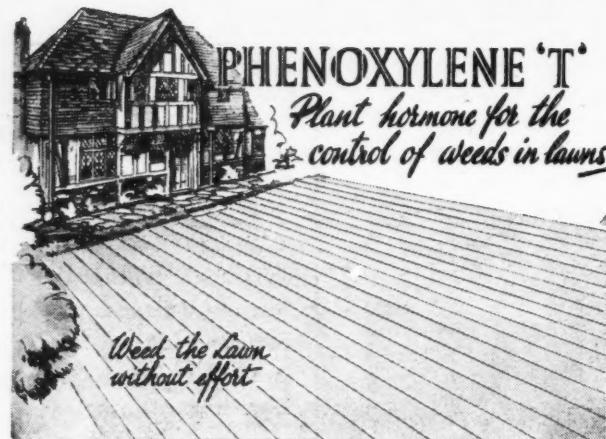
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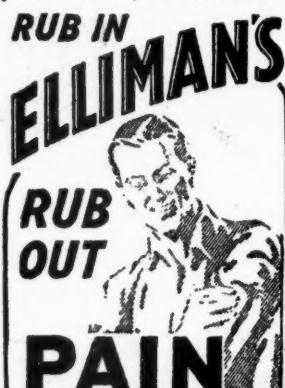
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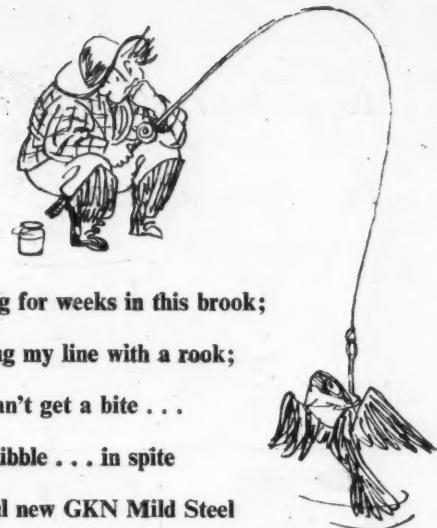
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Joseph Priestley Yorkshireman, Doctor of Divinity, theologian and pamphleteer, owes his fame to chemical discoveries made in his leisure hours as a relaxation from writing sermons and political broadsheets. His first success as a practical chemist was the accidental discovery of soda water. While living next door to a brewery in Leeds, curiosity led him to investigate the process of brewing. In doing so, he found that carbon dioxide gas, which is produced during the brewing of malt beverages, could be dissolved in ordinary water to make "aerated water". The success of this experiment set him on his chemical career and he acquired a renown which matched his considerable reputation as a theologian.

His appointment as librarian to Lord Shelburne at Bowood in 1773 gave him ample time and opportunity to develop his scientific hobbies and his most important work was done during the following eight years. In this period he discovered, prepared and studied a vast number of gases—all of them highly important—including oxygen, ammonia, nitrous oxide (the "laughing gas" of the dentist's surgery), hydrogen sulphide, hydrogen chloride and sulphur dioxide. Priestley's inventive genius was of a type that is typically British. As a practical experimenter he has had few, if any, equals, and the gases he discovered have proved of immense scientific and commercial importance. He died in 1804 in Pennsylvania, U.S.A.



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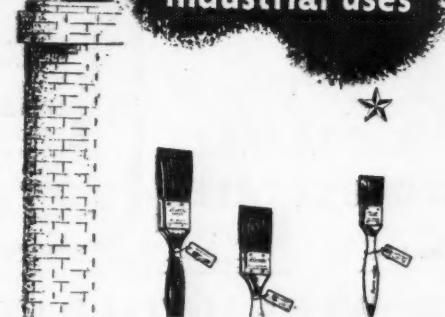
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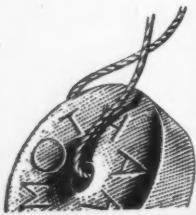
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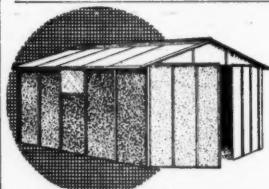
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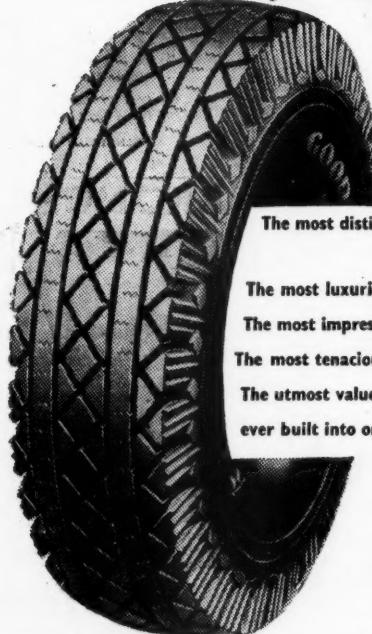
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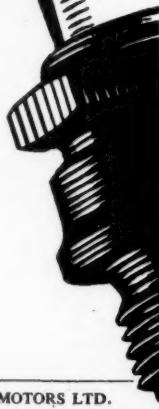
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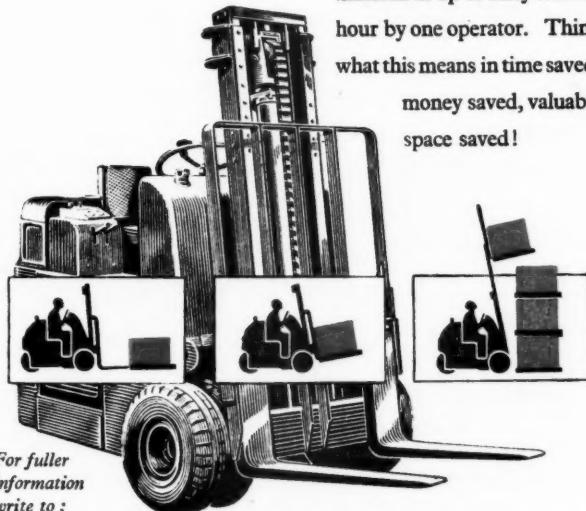
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"I'll come right away"

Even though yours be one of the best-regulated families, accidents will happen, and it is plain common sense to be ready and able to act for yourself. Whenever infection threatens, '**DETTOOL**', deadly to germs yet gentle to tissue, is 'first aid' in the truest sense. Keep it always handy.

RECKITT AND COLMAN LTD., HULL AND LONDON



Rusted & forgotten for 8 years in Caribou country, BARNEYS opens Factory-fresh!

But let this smoker from British Columbia tell the latest Barneys story in his own words.

John Sinclair, Ltd.

New Westminster, B.C.
24th Nov. 1948

Before the war my chum and I used to spend our holidays big-game hunting in the Caribou district of British Columbia. We always kept a supply of Barneys in our cabin and found that it added greatly to the pleasure of long nights spent yarning in front of the fire.

The war interrupted our trips and only recently did we get together again to reopen the cabin. While cleaning the place out, we came across a tin of Barneys in the sleeping loft, where it had been left some eight years before! The tin was rusted and the exposed portion of the rubber had been chewed by mice.

However, we opened it, and were delighted to find the contents factory-fresh and as good a smoke as the day we bought it.

Yours sincerely, ——

TO YOUNG SMOKERS EVERYWHERE

In your quest for the tobacco of abiding joy, you are asked to give trial to Barneys—which has won so many friends from the recommendations of older smokers.

★ Barneys (medium), Parsons Pleasure (mild), Punchbowie (full).
4/3d. the ounce each.

(309) John Sinclair Ltd., Manufacturers, Newcastle upon Tyne (H)



One Hundred Years Ago

IN 1849, when Henry Charles Harrod became proprietor of a small grocery shop in the muddy main street of Knightsbridge Village, London was already established as the centre of the world's trade—her merchants were wealthy and esteemed, her craftsmen renowned for their skill and workmanship, and her standards of law and industry the pattern for many nations.

The story of London is the story of Harrods. The same high principles of quality, service and integrity, and the same vision, enterprise and determination that have made the last hundred years the most glorious in the history of the world's greatest city, have been the foundations of the success of the House of Harrods.



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